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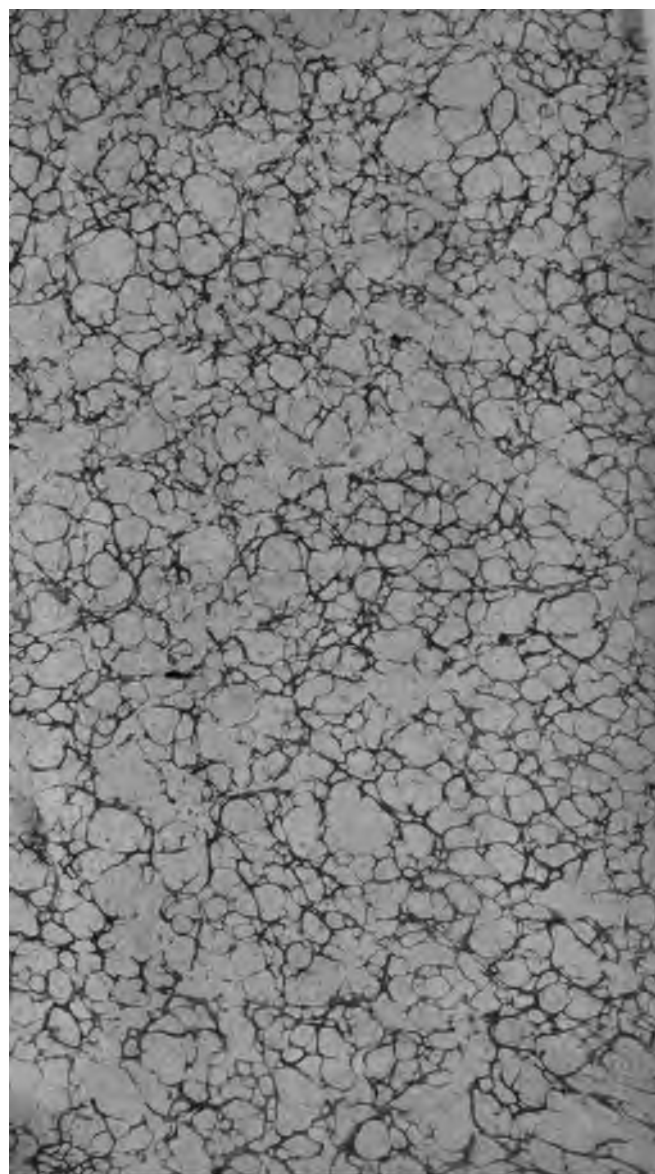
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Marie de Caspiigny 1171.

Marie de Caspiigny
from her
affectionate Mother
March 23^d

1871

LETTERS

TO

10052

MY UNKNOWN FRIENDS.

BY A LADY.

THIRD EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

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1849.

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Mary Augusta Champion de Crespigny
March. 1871.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE title of this volume is borrowed from Lavater. His "Lettres à ses Amis Inconnus" are, however, entirely unknown to the Writer, with the exception of the title itself. This suited her purpose for the same reason, probably, as that which originally induced Lavater to fix upon it; the object being evidently to mark out and distinguish a particular class of persons to whom the Letters are specially addressed. Unless a peculiarity of intellectual nature and habits constituted them friends, though unknown ones, of the Writer, most of the observations contained in the following pages would be uninteresting — many of them altogether unintelligible.

To the world at large the Writer has no desire to speak, even if she had the power

•

to win their attention. That advice is useless which is not founded upon a knowledge of the character of those to whom it is addressed: even were the attempt made to follow such advice, it could not be successful.

The Writer has therefore neither hope nor wish of exercising any influence over the minds of those who are not her "Unknown Friends." There may, indeed, be a variety in the characters of these friends; for almost all the following Letters are addressed to different persons; but the general intellectual features are always supposed to be the same, however the moral ones may differ.

One word more must be added. All the rules and systems recommended in these Letters have borne the test of long-tried and extensive experience. There is nothing new about them but their publication.

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LETTERS

TO

MY UNKNOWN FRIENDS.

LETTER I.

CONTENTMENT.

It is perhaps only the young who can be hopefully addressed on the present subject. A few years hence, and your habits of mind will be unalterably formed; a few years hence, and your struggle against a discontented spirit, even should you be given grace to attempt it, would be perpetually wearisome and discouraging. The penalty of past sin will pursue you until the end, not only in the pain caused by a discontented habit of mind, but also in the consciousness of its exceeding sinfulness.

Every thought that rebels against the law of God involves its own punishment in itself, by contributing to the establishment of habits that increase tenfold the difficulties to which a sinful nature exposes us.

Discontent is in this, perhaps, more dangerous than many other sins, — that it is far less tangible: unless we are in the constant habit of exercising strict watchfulness over our thoughts, it is almost insensibly they acquire an habitual tendency to murmuring and repining.

This is particularly to be feared in a person of your disposition. Many of your volatile, thoughtless, worldly-minded companions, destitute of all your holier feelings, living without object or purpose in life, and never referring to the law of God as a guide for thought or action, may nevertheless manifest a much more contented disposition than your own, and be apparently more submissive to the decision of the Creator as to the station of life in which you have each been placed.

To account for their apparent superiority over you on this point, it must be remembered that it is one of the dangerous responsibilities attendant on the best gifts of God — that if not employed accord-

ing to His will, they turn to the disadvantage of the possessor.

Your powers of reflection, your memory, your imagination, all calculated to provide you with rich sources of gratification if exercised in proper directions, will turn into curses instead of blessings if you do not watchfully restrain that exercise within the sphere of duty. The natural tendency of these faculties is to employ themselves on forbidden ground, for "every imagination of man's heart is evil continually." It is thus that your powers of reflection may only serve to give you a deeper and keener insight into the disadvantages of your position in life; and trivial circumstances, unpleasant probabilities, never dwelt on for a moment by the gay and thoughtless, will with you acquire a serious and fatal importance, if you direct towards them those powers of reasoning and concentrated thought which were given to you for far different purposes.

And while, on the one hand, your memory, if you allow it to acquire the bad habits against which I now warn you, will perpetually refresh in your mind vivid pictures of past sorrows, wrongs, and annoyances; your imagination, at the same time, will continually bring before you, under the most

exaggerated forms, and in the most striking colours, every possible unpleasantness likely to occur in the future. You may thus create for yourself a life apart, quite distinct from the real one, depriving yourself by wilful self-injury of the power of enjoying whatever advantages, successes, and pleasures your Heavenly Father may think it safe for you to possess.

Happiness, as far as it can be obtained in the path of duty, is a duty in itself, and an important one : without that degree of happiness which most people may secure for themselves, independent of external circumstances, neither health, nor energy, nor cheerfulness can be forthcoming to help us through the task of our daily duties.

It is indeed true that, under the most favourable circumstances, the thoughtful will never enjoy so much as others of that which is now generally understood by the word happiness. Anxieties must intrude upon them of which others know nothing : the necessary business of life, to be as well executed as they ought to execute it, must at times force down their thoughts to much that is painful for the present and anxious for the future. They cannot forget the past, as the light-hearted do, or life would bring them no improvement : the same diffi-

culties and dangers would in that case be rushed into heedlessly to-morrow, that were experienced yesterday, and forgotten to-day : but it is not only past difficulties and dangers which are remembered, —sorrows, too, they cannot, for they would not, forget.

Besides, in the contemplation of the future they must exercise their imagination as well as their reason, for the discovery of those evils and dangers which such foresight may enable them to guard against : this thoughtfulness is their wisdom as well as their instinct ; and it is therefore more difficult for them than it is for others to fulfil the reverse side of the duty, to “be careful for nothing.”*

To your strong mind, however, a difficulty will be “a thing to be overcome;” and you may, if you only will it, be prudent and sagacious, far-sighted and provident, without dwelling for a moment longer than such duties require on the unpleasantnesses, past, present, and future, of your lot in life.

Having thus seen in what respects your superiority of mind is likely to detract from your happiness, in the point of the colouring given by your thoughts to your life, let us, on the other

* Philippians, iv. 6.

hand, consider how this same superiority may be so directed as to make it contribute to your happiness, instead of detracting from it.

I spoke first of your reasoning powers. Let them not be exercised only in discovering the dangers and disadvantages likely to attend your peculiar position in life ; let them rather be directed to discover the advantages of those very features of your lot which are most opposed to your natural inclinations. Consider, in the first place, what there may be to reconcile you to the secluded life you so unwillingly lead. Withdrawn, indeed, you are from society—from the delightful intercourse of refined and intellectual minds: you hear of such enjoyments at a distance ; you hear of their being freely granted to those who cannot appreciate them as you could (safely granted to them for perhaps this very reason). You have no opportunity of forming those friendships so earnestly desired by a young and enthusiastic mind ; of admiring, even at a reverential distance, “emperors of thought and hand.” But then, as a compensation, you ought to consider that you are at the same time freed from those intrusions which wear away the time, the spirits, the very powers of enjoyment, of those who are placed in a more

public position than your own. When, at rare intervals, you enjoy any intercourse with congenial minds, it has for you a pleasurable excitement, a freshness of delight, almost unknown to those who mix much and habitually in literary and intellectual society. And while the powers of your own mind are preserving all that originality and energy for which no intellectual experience can compensate, you are saved the otherwise perhaps inevitable danger of adopting, parrot-like, the tastes and opinions of others who may indeed be your superiors, but who in a copy become wretchedly inferior to your real self. Time you have, too, to cultivate your mind in such a manner, and to such a degree, as may fit you to grace any society of the kind you so much desire; while those who are early and constantly engaged in this society are often obliged, from mere want of this precious possession, to copy others, and resign all intellectual peculiarity and individuality. To you, nobly free as you are from the vice of envy, I may venture to suggest another consideration, viz. the far greater influence you possess in your present small sphere of intellectual intercourse, than if you were mixed up with a crowd of others, most of them your equals, many your superiors.

If you have few opportunities of forming friendships, those few are tenfold more valuable than many acquaintance, amongst a crowd of whom, whatever merits you or they might possess, little time could be spared to discover, or experimentally appreciate, them. The one or two friends, whom you now love, and know yourself beloved by, might, in more exciting and busy scenes, have gone on meeting you for years without discovering the many bonds of sympathy which now unite you. In the seclusion you so much deplore, they and you have been given time to "deliberate, choose, and fix : " the conclusion of the poet will probably be equally applicable — you will "then abide till death." * Such friends are possessions sufficiently rare and valuable to compensate for any sacrifices by which they have been acquired.

Another of your grievances, one which presses the more heavily on those of graceful tastes, refined habits, and generous impulses, is the very small proportion of this world's goods which has fallen to your lot. You are perpetually obliged to deny yourself in matters of taste, of self-improvement, of charity. You cannot procure the books, the paintings, you wish for — the instruction which you

* Young's Night Thoughts.

earnestly desire, and would probably profit so much by. Above all, your eyes are pained by the sight of distress you cannot relieve, and you are thus constantly compelled to control and subdue the kindest and warmest impulses of your generous nature. The moral benefits of this peculiar species of trial belong to another part of my subject ; at present we are seeking for the most favourable point of view in which to contemplate the unpleasantness of your lot merely with relation to your temporal happiness. Look then around you, and even in your own limited sphere of observation it cannot but strike you, that those who derive most enjoyment from objects of taste, from books, paintings, &c., are exactly those who are situated as you are, who cannot procure them at will. It is certain there is something in the difficulty of attainment adding much to the preciousness of the objects we desire ; much, too, in the rareness of their bestowal. When, after patient waiting, and by means of prudent management, it is at last within your power to make some long-desired object your own, do you not experience much greater pleasure than can be felt by those who have only to wish and to have ?

In matters of charity this is still more strikingly true — the pleasure of bestowing ease and comfort on

the poor and distressed is enhanced tenfold by the consciousness of having made some personal sacrifice for its attainment. The rich, those who give of their superfluities only, can never fully appreciate what the pleasures of almsgiving really are.

Experience teaches that the necessity of scrupulous economy is the very best school for the education of those who are afterwards to be rich. Riches always bring their own peculiar claims along with them ; and unless a correct estimate is early formed of the value of money, and the manner in which it can be laid out to the best advantage, you will never enjoy the comforts and tranquillity well-managed riches may bestow. It is much to be doubted whether any one can skilfully manage large possessions who has not, at some period or other of life, been forced to exercise self-denial, and to give up resolutely all self-indulgent or unnecessary expenses. Those who indiscriminately gratify every wish as soon as it is excited can never experience the comforts of competency, though they may have the name of wealth and the reality of its accompanying cares.

Still further, let your memory and imagination be here exercised to assist in reconciling you to your present lot. Can you not remember a time

when you wanted money still more than you do now? — when you had a still greater difficulty in obtaining the things you reasonably desire? To those who have acquired the art of contentment, the present will always seem to have some compensating advantages over the past, however bright that past may appear to others. This valuable art will bring every hidden object gradually into light, as the dawning day seems to waken into existence those objects which had before been unnoticed in the darkness.

Lastly, your imagination, well employed, will make use of your partial knowledge of other people's affairs to picture how much worse off many of them are — how much worse off you might yourself be. You, for instance, can still accomplish much by the aid of self-denial; while others, with hearts as warm in charity, as overflowing as your own, have not more to give than the "cup of cold water," — word of mercy and consolation.

You may, perhaps, still further complain that you have no object of exciting interest to engage your attention, to develope your powers of labour and endurance, and to exercise your talents. Never

has this kind of trial been more vividly described than in the well-known lines of a modern poet:—

“ She was active, stirring, all fire —
Could not rest, could not tire —
To a stone she had given life !
—— For a shepherd's, miner's, huntsman's wife,
Never in all the world such an one !
And here was plenty to be done,
And she that could do it, great or small,
She was to do nothing at all.” *

This wish for occupation, for influence, for power even, is not only right in itself, but the unvarying accompaniment of the consciousness of high capabilities. It may, however, be intended that these cravings should be satisfied in a different way, and at a different time, from that which your earthly thoughts are now desiring. It may be that the very excellence of the office for which you are finally destined requires a greater length of preparation than that needful for ordinary duties and ordinary trials. At present you are resting in peace, without any anxious cares or difficult responsibilities, but you know not how soon the time may come that will call forth and strain to the utmost your energies both of mind and body.

* “ The Flight of the Duchess.” Browning.

You should diligently make use of the present interval of repose as a preparation for the future, by maturing your prudence, strengthening your decision, acquiring control over your own temper and your own feelings, and thus fitting yourself for the exercise of control over others.

Or are you, on the contrary, wasting the precious present time in vain repinings, in murmurings that weaken both mind and body, so that when the hour of trial comes you will be entirely unfitted to realise the beautiful ideal of the poet?—

“ A perfect woman, nobly plann’d
To warn, to counsel, to command :
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill.” *

Here, again, I would ask you to make use of your powers of reflection and memory. Reflect what trials and difficulties are in the common course of events likely to assail you ; remember former difficulties, former days or weeks of trial, when all your now dormant energies were developed and strained to the utmost. You felt then the need of much greater powers of mind and body than those which you now complain are lying dormant and useless. Further, imagine the future cases that

* Wordsworth.

may occur in which every natural and acquired faculty may be employed for the great advantage of those who are dear to you ; and you will acknowledge now, as you will experience then, that a long previous interval of repose and preparation was altogether needful.

Such reflections, memories, and imaginations must, however, be carefully guarded, lest, instead of reconciling you to the apparent uselessness of your present life, they should contribute to increase your discontent. This they might easily do, although such reflections and memories, instead of contemplating the pleasures and the importance of increased responsibilities, were confined to trials and difficulties alone. To an ardent nature like yours, trials themselves, even severe ones, if they exercised the powers of your mind, and the energies of your character, would be more welcome than the tame uniform life you now lead.

The considerations above recommended can therefore be only safely indulged in connection with, and secondary to, a most vigilant and conscientious examination into the truth of one of your principal complaints, viz. that you have to do, like the Duke's wife, "nothing at all."* You may be

* See page 12.

"seeking great things" to do, and consequently neglecting those small charities which "soothe, and heal, and bless." Listen to the words of an eminent moral teacher of our own day :—"The situation that has not its duty, its *ideal*, was never yet occupied" by man. Yes, here, in this poor, miserable, pampered, despised actual, wherein thou even now standest, here, or nowhere, is thy *ideal*; work it out, therefore, and working believe, live, be free. Fool! the ideal is in thyself; the impediment, too, is in thyself: thy condition is but the stuff thou art to shape that same ideal out of—what matters whether the stuff be of this sort or of that, so the form thou give it be heroic, be poetic? O thou that pinest in the imprisonment of the actual, and criest bitterly to the gods for a kingdom wherein to rule and create, know this of a truth—the thing thou seekest is already with thee, 'here or nowhere,' couldst thou only see."

When you examine the above assertions by the light of Scripture, can you contradict their truth?

Let us, however, ascend to a still higher point of view. Have we not all, in every imaginable situation, a work mighty and difficult enough to develope our strongest energies, to engage our deepest interests? Have we not all to "work out

our own salvation with fear and trembling ?”* Professing to believe, as we do, that the discipline of every day is ordered by Infinite Love and Infinite Wisdom, so as best to assist us in this awfully important task, can we justly complain of a mental void, of an inadequacy of occupation, in any of the positions of life ?

The only work that can fully satisfy an immortal spirit's cravings for excitement is the work appointed for each of us. And it is one that has no intervals of repose, far less of languor or *ennui*: the labour it demands ought never to cease, the intense and engrossing interest it possesses can never vary or lessen in importance. The alternative is more awful than human mind can yet conceive; those who have not fulfilled their appointed work, those who have not, through the merits of Christ, obtained the “holiness without which no man shall see the Lord,”† “must depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”‡

With a hell to avoid, and a heaven to obtain, do you murmur for want of interest, of occupation !

In the words of the old story, “Look below on

* Philippians, ii. 12.

† Hebrews, xii. 14.

‡ Matt. xxv. 41.

the earth, and then above in heaven:" remember that your only business here is to get there; then, instead of repining, you will be thankful that no great temporal work is given you to do which might, as too often happens, distract your attention and your labours from the attainment of life eternal. Having been once convinced of the awful and engrossing importance of this "one thing" we have to "do,"* you will more easily see how many minor duties may be appointed you to fulfil, on a path that before seemed as useless as it was uninteresting. For you will now have learned to estimate the small details of daily life, not according to their temporal insignificance, not as they may influence your worldly fate, but as they may have a tendency to mould your spirit into closer conformity to the image of the Son.† You will now no longer inquire whether you have any work to do which you might yourself consider suitable to your capabilities and energies; but whether there is within your reach any, the smallest, humblest work of love, contemned or unobserved before, when you were more proud and less vigilant.

Look, then, with prayer and watchfulness into all the details of your daily life, and you will assuredly

* Philippians, iii. 13.

† Romans, viii. 29.

find much formerly-unnoticed "stuff," out of which "your ideal" may be wrought.

You may, for instance, have no opportunity of teaching on an enlarged scale, or even of taking a class at a Sunday school, or of instructing any of your poor neighbours in reading or in the word of God. Such labours of love may, it is possible, though not probable, be wholly out of your reach. If, however, you are on the watch for opportunities (and we are best made quick-sighted to their occurrence in the course of the day, by the morning's earnest prayer for their being granted), you may be able to help your fellow-pilgrims Zion-ward in a variety of small ways. "A word in season, how good is it!" The mere expression of religious sympathy has often cheered and refreshed the weary traveller on his perhaps difficult and lonely way. A verse of Scripture, a hymn taught to a child, only the visitor of a day, has often been blessed by God to the great spiritual profit of the child so taught. Are not even such small works of love within your reach?

Again, with respect to family duties, I know that in some cases, when there are many to fulfil such duties, it is a more necessary and often a more difficult task to refrain altogether from interfering in

them. They ought to be allowed to serve as a safety-valve for the energies of those members of the family who have no other occupations : of these there will always be some in a large domestic circle. Without, however, interfering actively and habitually, which it may not be your duty to do, are you always ready to help when you are asked, and to take trouble willingly upon yourself when the excitement and the credit of the arrangement will belong exclusively to others ? This is a good test of the humility and benevolence of your spirit ; how is the test borne ?

Further, you may complain that your conversation is not valued, and that therefore you have no inducement to exertion for the amusement of others ; that your cheerfulness and good temper under sorrows and annoyances are of no consequence, as you are not considered of sufficient importance for any display of feeling to attract attention. When I hear such complaints (and they are not unfrequent from the younger members of large families) I have little doubt that the sting in all these murmurs is infixed by their pride. They assure me, at the same time, that if there was any one to care much about it, to watch anxiously whether they were vexed or pleased, they would be able to exercise the strictest control

over their feelings and temper—and I believe it, for here their pride and their affection would both come to the assistance of duty. What God requires of us, however, is its fulfilment when all these things are against us. The effort to control grief, to conceal depression, to conquer ill-temper, will be a far more acceptable offering in His eyes when His eyes alone are expected to witness it.

I must, besides, remind you that your proud spirit may deceive you when it suggests, that because your sadness or your ill-humour attracts no expressed notice or excites no efforts to remove it, it does not therefore affect those around you. This is not the case. Even the gloom and ill-humour of a servant, who only remains a few minutes in attendance, is depressing and annoying even to an unobservant master and mistress, though they may make no efforts to remove it. How much more, then, may your want of cheerfulness and temper affect, though it may be insensibly, the peace of your family circle! Here again you are seeking great things for yourself, and neglecting your appointed work because it does not to you appear sufficiently worthy of your high capabilities. Your proud spirit needs being humbled, and therefore,

probably, it is that you will not be allowed to do great things. No, you must first learn the less agreeable task of doing small things, of doing what would, perhaps, be called easy things by those who have never tried them. To wear a contented look when you know that, perhaps, the effort will not be observed, certainly not appreciated—to take submissively the humblest part in the conversation, and take that part cheerfully—to bear with patience every hasty word that may be spoken, and so to forget it that your future conduct may be uninfluenced by it—to remove every difficulty, the removal of which is within your reach, without expecting that your exertions will be acknowledged or even observed—to be always ready with your sympathy, encouragement, and counsel, however scornfully they may have been before rejected;—these are all acts of self-renunciation peculiarly fitted to a woman's sphere of duty, and they have a direct tendency to cherish the difficult and excellent grace of humility. But even such actions as these may help to foster rather than to subdue a spirit of discontent, if they are performed from a motive of obtaining any, even the most exalted, human approbation: they must be done to God alone, and

then the promise is sure, "Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."* Thus, too, the art of contentment may be much more easily learnt. Disappointment will surely sour your temper if you look forward to human appreciation of a self-denying habit of life; but when the approbation of God is the object sought for, no neglect from others can excite discontent or much regret. For we then place ourselves out of the reach of disappointment: whatever happens to us through the day has all been decreed by Him; as it must therefore give us opportunities of fulfilling His will, and gaining His approbation, we must necessarily "be content."

It is, indeed, always owing to some deficiency in religious principle, that one discontented thought is suffered to rest in the mind. If our heart and our treasure were in heaven†, should we be easily excited to regret and irritation about the inconveniences of our position on earth? If we sought "first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,"‡ should we have so much energy remaining to waste on petty worldly annoyances? If we obeyed the

* Matt. vi. 18.

† Matt. vi. 20, 21.

‡ Matt. vi. 33.

injunction, "Have faith in God," should we daily and hourly, by our sinful murmuring, imply such doubts of the Divine attributes of wisdom, love, and power? This is a want of faith you do not manifest towards men. You would trust yourself fearlessly to the care of an earthly physician; you would believe that he understood how to adapt his strengthening or lowering remedies to each varying feature of your case; you would even provide yourself with remedies, which, on the faith of his skill, you would trustingly use to meet every symptom that might arise on future occasions. But when the Great Physician manifests a far greater watchfulness to adapt His daily discipline to your varying temper and the different stages of your Christian growth, you murmur—you believe not in His wisdom as you do in that of the sons of earth.

But do not take His wisdom on faith alone: you must indeed believe, you must believe or perish; but it may be as yet too difficult a lesson for you to believe against sense, against feeling. What I would urge upon you is, to strengthen your weak faith by the lessons of experience, to inquire anxiously, and to pray to be enabled to see distinctly, into the peculiar manner in which each trial of your daily lot is adapted to your own individual case.

I do not speak now of great trials, of such afflictions as crush the sufferer in the dust. When the hand of God is so plainly seen, it is comparatively easy to submit; and His Holy Spirit ever fulfilling the promise, "As thy day is, so shall thy strength be,"* sometimes makes the riven heart strong to bear that which, in prospective, it dares not even contemplate. You, however, have had no trial of this nature; yours are the petty irritations, the small vexations, which "smart more because they hold in Holy Writ no place."† Even at more peaceful times, when you can think with resignation of the general character of your lot in life, you cannot subdue your spirit to patience under the hourly varying annoyances and temptations which beset you. The peculiar sensitiveness of your disposition, your affectionate, generous nature, your refinement of mind, and quick tact, all expose you to suffer more severely than others from the selfishness, the coarse-mindedness, the bluntness of perception of those around you. You often say, in the bitterness of your heart, Any other trial but this I could have borne; every other chastisement would have been light in comparison. But why have you so little faith?

* Deuteronomy, xxxiii. 25.

† Lyra Apostolica.

Why do you not see, that because these petty trials are so severe to you, therefore are they sent? All the amiable qualities I have enumerated, and the love they win for you, would make you admire and value yourself too much, unless your system were reduced, so to speak, by a series of petty, but continued, worries. As I said before, you must seek to strengthen your faith by tracing out their close connexion with the "needs be" for them. It is probably exactly at the time when you are too much elated by praise and admiration that you meet with some counterbalancing annoyance, or perhaps are tempted into some fault of temper which will lessen you in your own eyes as well as in those of others. It often happens, too, that you are visited by some peculiar trial, when you have blamed others for being too easily overcome by a trial of the very same kind. "Stand upon" an anxious "watch," and you will see how constantly our severe judgments are punished by falling ourselves into the temptations we had treated as light ones when sitting in judgment upon others. If you would acquire the habit of exercising faith with respect to the smallest details of your everyday life, by such faith the light itself might be won, and your eyes opened to see how wondrously

all things, even those which appear the most needlessly worrying, are made to work together for your good.* These are, however, but the first lessons in the school of faith, the first steps on the road which leads to "rest in God." Severer trials are hastening onward, for which your present petty trials are serving as a preparatory discipline. According to the manner in which these are met and supported, will be your patience in the hour of deep darkness and bitter desolation. Waste not the smallest of your present sorrows: let them all, by the help of prayer, and watchfulness, and self-control, work their appointed work. Let them lead you each day more and more trustingly to "cast all your care upon Him who careth for you."† In the present hours of tranquillity and calm, let the light and infrequent storms, the passing clouds, that disturb your peace, serve as warnings to you to find a sure refuge before the clouds of affliction become so heavy, and its storms so violent, that there will be no power of seeking a haven of security. That must be sought and found in seasons of comparative peace. For although the before undisciplined soul may finally, through the waves of sorrow, make its way into the ark, its long previous struggles, and its

* Romans, viii. 28.

† 1 Peter, v. 7.

after-harrowing doubts and fears, will shatter it nearly to pieces before it reaches its final rest. It may indeed, by the free grace of God, be saved at the last, but during the remainder of its earthly pilgrimage there is no hope for it of joy and peace in believing.

But when the hour of earthly desolation comes to those who have long acknowledged the special providence of God in "all the dreary intercourse of daily life," "they know in whom they have believed,"* and no storms can shake that faith. They know from experience that all things work together for good to them that love God. In the loving child-like confidence of long-tried and now perfecting faith, they are enabled to say from the depths of the heart, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."† They seek not now to ascertain the "needs be" for this particular trial. It might harrow up the human heart too much to trace the details of sorrows such as these, as they formerly examined into the details of those of daily life. "It is the Lord;" these words alone, not only still all complaining, but fill the soul with a depth of peace never experienced by the believer until all happiness is withdrawn but that which

* 2 Timothy, i. 12.

† 1 Samuel, iii. 18.

comes direct from God. "It is the Lord," who died that we might live ; and can we murmur, even if we dared ? No ; the love of Christ constrains us to cast ourselves at His feet, not only in submission, but in grateful adoration. It is through His redeeming love that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, will work for us a far more eternal weight of glory."

Even the very depth of mystery which may attend the sorrowful dispensation will only more fully develope and strengthen the Christian's faith and love. She will be enabled to rejoice that God does not allow her to see even one reason for the stroke that lays low all her earthly happiness ; as thus only, perhaps, can she experience all the fulness of peace that accompanies an unquestioning trust in the wisdom and love of His decrees. For such unquestioning trust, however, there must be a long and diligent preparation : it is not the growth of days or weeks, yet, unless it is begun even this very day, it may never be begun at all. The practice of daily contentment is the only means of finally attaining to Christian resignation.

I do not appeal to you for the necessity of immediate action, because this day may be your last. I do not exhort you "to live as if this day were

the whole of life, and not a part or section of it,"* because it may, in fact, be the whole of life to you. It may be so, but it is not probable; and when you have certainties to guide you, they are better excitements to immediate action than the most solemn possibilities.

The certainty to which I now appeal is, that every duty I have been urging upon you will be much easier to-day than it would be even so soon as to-morrow. One hour's longer indulgence of a discontented spirit, of rebellious and murmuring thoughts, will stamp on your mind an impression, which, however slight, will entail upon you a life-long struggle against it. Every indulged thought becomes a part of ourselves: you have the awful freedom of will to make yourself what you will to be. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."† "Quench" the Spirit‡, and the holy flame may never be rekindled. Kneel, then, before God, even now, to pray that you may be enabled to will aright.

Before you opened these pages, some of your daily irritations were probably preying on your mind. You have often, perhaps, recurred to the

* Jean Paul Richter.

† 1 Peter, v. 8, 9.

‡ 1 Thessalonians, v. 19.

annoyance, whatever it may be, while you read on and on. Make this annoyance your first opportunity of victory, the first step in the path of contentment. Pray to an ever-present God, that He may open your eyes to see how far the annoyance you complain of may be the due and inevitable chastisement of some former sin, — how large may be the portion of blame deserved by yourself, — how, finally, it may turn to your present profit, by giving you a keener insight into the evils of your own heart, and a more indulgent view of the often imaginary wrongs of others towards you.

Let not this trial be lost to you ; by faith and prayer this cloud may rain down blessings upon you. The annoyance from which you are suffering may be a small one, casting but a temporary shadow, even like the

“ Cloud passing over the moon ;
’Tis passing, and ’twill pass full soon.”*

But ere that shadow has passed away, your fate may be as decided as that of the renegade in poetic fiction. During the time this cloud has rested upon you, the first link of an interminable chain of habits, for good or for ill, may have been fastened around

* The Siege of Corinth.

Bygone

you. Who can tell what "Now" it is that "is the accepted time?" We know from Scripture that there is this awful period, and your present temptation to murmurs and rebellion against the will of God (for it is still His will, though it may be manifested through a created instrument) may be to you that "Now." Pray earnestly before you decide what use you will make of it.

LETTER II.

TEMPER.

THE subject proposed for consideration in the following letter has been already treated of in perhaps all the different modes of which it appears susceptible. Every religious and moral motive has been urged upon the victim of ill-temper, and it is scarcely necessary to add that each has in its turn been urged in vain. This failing of the character comes gradually to be considered as one over which the rational will has no control; it is even supposed possible that a Christian may grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Saviour while the vice of ill-temper still reigns triumphant.

It is, indeed, a certain fact that, unless the temper itself is specially controlled, and specially watched over, it may deteriorate even when the character in other respects improves; for the habit

of defeat weakens the exercise of the will in this particular direction, and gradually diminishes the hope or the effort of acquiring a victory over the indulged failing. It is a melancholy consideration, if it is, as I believe, really the case, that a Christian may increase in love to God and man, while at the same time perpetually inflicting severe wounds on the peace and happiness of those who are nearest and dearest to her. Worse than all, she is by such conduct wounding the Saviour "in the house of His friends,"* by bringing disgrace and ridicule upon the Holy Name by which she is called.

In the compatibility often tacitly inferred between a bad temper and a religious course of life, there seems to be an instinctive recognition that this peculiar vice is so much the necessary result of physical organisation, that the motives proving effectual against other sins are ineffectual for the extirpation of this. Perhaps if this recognition were more distinct, and its details better understood, a new and more successful method might be employed to effect the cure of ill-temper.

As an encouragement to this undertaking, some striking instances within your own knowledge prove, without doubt, that there are certain means by

* Zechariah, xiii. 6

which, if you could only discover them, the vice in question may be completely subdued. Even amongst heathen nations, we know that the art of self-control was so well understood, and so successfully practised, that Plato, Socrates, and other philosophers were able to bring their naturally fiery and violent tempers into complete subjection to their will. Can it be that this secret has been lost along with the other mysteries of those distant times? that the mode of controlling the temper is now as undiscoverable as the manner of preparing the Tyrian dye, and other forgotten arts? It is surely a disgrace to the cowardly Christians who have, in addition to the natural powers of the heathen moralist, the freely offered grace of God to work with them and in them, that they should walk so unworthy of the high vocation wherewith they are called as to shrink hopelessly from a moral competition with the ignorant worshippers of old.

My sister, these things ought not so to be; you feel they ought not, yet day after day you break through the resolutions formed in your calmer moments, and repeat, probably increase, your manifestations of uncontrolled ill-temper. This is not yet, however, in your case a wilful sin; you still mourn bitterly over the shame to yourself,

and the annoyance to others, caused by the indulgence of your ill-temper. You are also painfully alive to the doubts which your conduct excites in the minds of your more worldly associates as to the reality of a vital and transforming efficacy in religion. You feel that you are not only disobeying God yourself, but that you are providing others with excuses for disobeying Him, and with examples of disobedience. You mourn over these considerations in bitterness of heart; you even pray for strength to resist this your besetting sin, and then—you leave your room, and fall into the same sin on the very first opportunity.

If, however, prayer itself does not prove an effectual safeguard from persistence in sin, you will ask what other means can be hopefully employed. None — none whatever: that from which real prayer cannot preserve us is an inevitable misfortune. But, think you that any kind of sin can be among those misfortunes that cannot be avoided? No, my friend: "He is able to succour them that are tempted:"* and we are also assured that He is willing. Cease, then, from accusing the All-merciful, even by implication, of being the cause of your continuing in sin; and examine carefully into

* Hebrews, ii. 18.

the nature of those prayers which you complain have never been answered. The Scripture reason for such disappointments is clearly and distinctly given: "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss." * Examine then, in the first place, whether you yourself are asking "amiss." What is your primary motive for desiring the removal of this besetting sin? Is it the consideration of its being so hateful in the sight of God, of its being injurious to the cause of religion? Or is it not rather because you feel that it makes you unloveable to those around you, and inflicts pain on those who are very dear to you, at the same time lessening your own dignity and wounding your self-respect? These are all proper and allowable motives of action while kept in their subordinate place; but if they become the primary actuating principle, instead of a conscientious hatred of sin because it is the abominable thing that God hates †—if pleasing man be your chief object, you have no reason to complain that your prayers are unanswered. The Word of God has told you that it must be so: you have asked "amiss."

There is also a secondary sense in which we may "ask amiss"—when we pray without cor-

* James, iv. 3.

† Jeremiah, xlv. 4.

responding effort. Some worthy people think that prayer alone is to obtain for them all the benefits they can desire; that the influences of the Holy Spirit will, unassisted by human exertion, produce a transforming change in the temper and the conduct. This they call magnifying the grace of God; as if it could be supposed that His gracious help would ever be granted for the purpose of slackening, instead of encouraging and exciting, our own exertions. Do not the Scriptures abound in exhortations, warnings, and threatenings on the subject of individual watchfulness, diligence, and unceasing conflicts? "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." * Perhaps you have prayed under the mental delusion I have above described: you have expected the work should be done *for* you instead of *with* you; that "the constraining love of Christ" would compel you necessarily to abandon your sinful habits,—while, in fact, its efficacy consists in constraining you to carry on a perpetual struggle against them.

Look through the day that is past, or watch yourself through that which is to come, and observe whether any violent conflict takes place in your

* Isaiah, viii. 20.

mind whenever you are tempted to sin. I fear, on the contrary, that you expect the efficacy of your prayers to be displayed in preserving you from any painful conflict whatever. It is strange, most strange, how generally this perversion of mind exists. Notwithstanding all the opposing assertions of the Bible, people imagine that the Christian's life, after conversion, is to be one of freedom from temptation, and from all internal struggles. The contrary fact is, that they only really begin when we ourselves begin the Christian course with earnestness and sincerity.

If you would possess the safety of preparation, you must look out for, and expect, constant temptations and perpetual conflicts. By such means alone can your character be gradually forming into "a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light." * Whenever your conflicts cease, you will enter into your glorious rest. You will not be kept in a world of sin and sorrow one moment after that in which you have attained to sufficient Christian perfection to qualify you for a safe freedom from trials and temptations; but as long as you remain in a temporal school of discipline, "your only safety is to feel the stretch and energy of a continual strife." †

* Colossians, i. 12.

† Archdeacon Manning.

If I have been at all successful in altering your views of the *manner* in which you are first to set about acquiring a permanent victory over your besetting sin, you will be the more inclined to bestow your attention on the means I am now going to recommend for your consequent adoption. They have been often tried and proved effectual; experience is their chief recommendation. They may indeed startle some pious minds, as seeming to encroach too far on what they think ought to be the unassisted work of the Spirit upon the human character; but you are too intelligent to allow such assertions, unfounded as they are on Scripture, to prove much longer a stumbling-block in your way.

I would first of all recommend a very strict inquiry into the nature of the things that affect your temper, that you may for the future be on your guard to avoid them as far as lies in your power. Avoidance is always the safest plan when it involves no deviation from the straightforward path of duty; there will be enough of inevitable conflicts left to keep up the habits of self-control and watchfulness. Indeed, the avoidance which I recommend to you involves in itself the necessity of so much vigilance, that it will help to prepare you for measures of more active resistance. On

this principle, then, you will shrink from every species of discussion on either practical or abstract subjects which is likely to excite you beyond control, and disable you from bearing with gentleness and calmness the triumph, either real or imaginary, of your opponent. The time will come, I trust, when no subject need be forbidden to you on these grounds; but at present you must submit to an invalid regimen, and shun every thing that has even a tendency to excitement.

This system of avoidance is the more important, because whenever your ill-temper acquires the mastery over you its strength is tenfold increased for the next conflict, at the same time that your hopes of effectual resistance are of course weakened. You find, at each fall before the power of sin, a greater difficulty in exercising faith in either human or divine means of improvement. You do not, indeed, doubt the power of God, but a disbelief steals over you equally fatal in its tendencies. You allow in yourself vague doubts of His willingness to help you, or a suspicion insinuates itself that the God whom you so anxiously try to please would not allow you to fall so constantly into error if this error were of a very heinous nature. You should be careful to shun any course of

conduct possibly suggestive of such dangerous imaginations. You should seek to establish in your mind the habitual conviction that, victory being placed by God within your reach, you must conquer or perish! None but those who by obedience prove themselves children of God shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.*

I have spoken of the vigilance and self-control required for the avoidance of every discussion on exciting subjects ; but this difficulty is small indeed when compared with those unexpected assaults on the temper which we are exposed to at every hour of the day. To meet these with Christian heroism will require the perpetual exertion of all our inherent and imparted powers. Every device that ingenuity can suggest, every practice that others by experience have found successful, is at least worth the trial. One plan of resistance suits one turn of mind, an entirely opposite one proves more useful for another. To you I should especially recommend the habitual consideration that every trial of temper throughout the day is an opportunity for conflict and for victory. Think, then, of every such trial as an occasion of tri-

* Matt. xxv. 24.

umphing over your animal nature, of increasing the dominion of your rational will over the opposing temptations of "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

Consider each vexatious annoyance as coming, through human instruments, from the hand of God himself, and as an opportunity offered by His love and His wisdom for strengthening your character and bringing your will into closer conformity with His. You should cultivate the general habit of considering every trial in this peculiar point of view ; thinking over the subject in your quiet hours especially, that thus you may have your spirit prepared for moments of unexpected excitement.

To a person of your reflective turn of mind, the prudent management of the thoughts is a principal means towards the proper government of the temper. As some insects assume the colour of the plant they feed on, so do the thoughts on which the mind habitually nourishes itself impart their own peculiar colouring to the mental and moral constitution. On your thoughts when you are alone, when you wander through the fields or by the road-side, or sit at your work in useful hours of solitude, depends very much the spirit you are of when you again enter into society. If, for instance, you think over the trials of temper which you are

inevitably exposed to during the day as indications of the unkindness of your fellow-creatures, you will not fail to exaggerate mere trifles into serious offences, and will prepare a sore place, as it were, in your mind, to which the slightest touch must give pain. On the contrary, if you forcibly withdraw your thoughts from the human instrument that has inflicted the wounds you suffer or are likely to suffer,—if you look upon the annoyance only as an opportunity of improvement and a message of mercy from God himself, you will then gradually get rid of all mental irritation, and feel nothing but pity for your tormentors, knowing that you have in reality been benefited instead of injured. When you have acquired greater power of controlling your thoughts, it will be serviceable to you to think over all the details of the annoyance from which you are suffering, and to consider all the extenuating circumstances of the case; to imagine (this will be a good use to make of your vivid imagination) what painful chord you may have unconsciously struck, what circumstances may possibly have led the person who annoys you to suppose that the provocation originated with yourself instead of with her. It is possible that very innocent words of yours may have appeared to

her as cutting insinuations or taunts referring to some former painful circumstance forgotten or unknown by you, but sorrowfully remembered by her; or they may have appeared a wilful contradiction of her known opinion and known wishes, for mere contradiction's sake.

By the time you have turned over in your mind all these possible or probable circumstances, you will generally see that the person offending may really be not so much (if at all) to blame; and then the candid and generous feelings of your nature will convert your anger into regret for the pain you have unintentionally inflicted. I do not, however, recommend you to venture upon this practice *yet*. Under present circumstances, any indulged reflection upon the minute features of the offence, and the possible feelings of the offender, will be more likely to increase your irritation than to subdue it; you will not be able to view your own case through an unprejudiced medium, until you have acquired the power of compelling your thoughts to dwell on those features only of an annoyance which may tend to soothe the feelings, while you avoid all such as may irritate them.

A much lower stage of self-control, and one in which you may immediately begin to exercise your-

self, is the prevention of your thoughts from dwelling for a moment on any offence against you, while you steadily look upon such offence in this point of view alone—that it is one of those divinely sent opportunities of Christian warfare without which you could make no advance in the spiritual life.

The consideration of the subject of temper, as connected with habits of thought, on which I have dwelt so long and in so much detail, is of the greatest importance. It is absolutely impossible that you can exercise control over your temper, or cherish charitable and forgiving feelings towards those around you, if you suffer your mind to contemplate what you consider their faults and your own injuries. Are you, however, really aware that you are in the habit of indulging such thoughts? I doubt it. Few people observe the direction their thoughts habitually take until they have practised for some little time strict watchfulness over those shadowy and fleeting things upon which most of the realities of life depend. Watch yourself, therefore, I entreat you, even during this one day. I ask only for one day, because I know that in a character like yours such an examination, once begun in all earnestness, will only cease with life. It is of sins of ignorance and carelessness alone

that I accuse you ; not of wilfully harbouring malicious and revengeful thoughts. You have never, probably, observed their existence ; how then could you have analysed them ? Perhaps the following illustration may serve to suggest to you proofs of the danger of the practice I have warned you against. If one of your acquaintance had offended another, you would feel no doubt as to the sinfulness and the cruelty to both of dwelling on all the aggravating circumstances of the offence, until the temper of the offended one was thoroughly roused and exasperated, though, before the interference of a third person, the subject may have been passed over unnoticed. Is not this the very process you are continually carrying on in your own mind,—to your own injury, indeed, far more than to any one else's ? These habits of thought must be altered, or no other measures of self-control can prosper with you, though, in connection with this most important one, many others must be adopted.

One practice that has been found beneficial is that of offering up a short prayer, even as your hand is upon the door which is to admit you into family intercourse, an intercourse which, more than any other, involves duties and responsibilities as well as privileges and pleasures. This practice would

insure your never entering upon a scene of trial without having the subject of difficulty brought vividly before your mind. David's prayer—"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips"*—would be very well suited to such occasions as these. This prayer would, at the same time, bring you down help from Heaven, and, by putting you on your guard, rouse your own energies to brave any temptation that may await you. Another plan has often been tried with success—that of repeating the Lord's Prayer deliberately through to oneself, before venturing to utter a word aloud on any occasion that excites the temper. The spirit of this practice is highly commendable, as, there being no direct petition against the sin of ill-temper, it is principally by elevating the spirit "into a higher moral atmosphere," that the experiment is expected to be successful.

You will find that a scrupulous politeness towards the members of your family, and towards servants, will be a great help in preserving your temper through the trials of domestic intercourse. You are seldom even tempted to indulge in irritable answers, impatient interruptions, abrupt contradic-

* Psalm cxli. 3.

tions, while in the society of strangers. The reason is, that the indulgence of your temper on such occasions would oblige you to break through the chains of early and confirmed habits. From infancy those habits have been forming, and they impel you, almost unconsciously, to control even the tones of your voice while strangers are present. Have you not sometimes in the middle of an irritable observation caught yourself changing and softening the harsh tone or the rough manner, when you have discovered the unexpected presence of a stranger in the family circle? You have still enough of self-respect to feel deep shame when such things have happened; and the very moment when you are suffering from these feelings of shame is that in which you ought to form, and begin to execute, resolutions of future amendment. While under the influence of regretful excitement, you will have the more strength to break through the chains of your old habits, and to begin the formation of new ones. If the same courtesy, until now only observed towards strangers, were habitually exercised towards the members of your domestic circle, it would, in time, become as difficult to break through the forms of politeness by indulging ill-

temper towards them, as towards strangers or mere acquaintance.

I wish to urge this point upon you even more strongly with regard to servants. There is great meanness in any display of ill-temper towards those who will probably lose their place and their character, if they are tempted by your provocation (while without your restraints of good-breeding and good education) to the same display of ill-temper that you yourself are guilty of. On the other hand, there is no better evidence of self-respect, of dignified and refined generosity of disposition, than a scrupulous politeness in requiring and requiting those services for which the low-minded imagine their money is a sufficient payment. You will not alone receive as a recompense the love and the grateful respect of those who serve you, but you will also be forming habits which will offer a powerful resistance to the temptations of ill-humour.

You will not, surely, object to any of the precautions or practices above recommended, that they are too trifling or too troublesome: you have suffered so much from your besetting sin, that I can suppose you willing to try every possible means of cure.

You should, however, to strengthen your desire

of resistance and of victory, look much further than the unpleasant consequences of ill-temper in your own case alone. You are still young, life has gone prosperously with you, the present is fair and smiling, and the future full of bright hopes; you have, comparatively speaking, few occasions for irritation or despondency. A naturally warm temper is seen in you under the least forbidding aspect, combined, as it is, with gay animal spirits, strong affections, and ready good-nature. You need only look around, however, to see the probability of things being quite different with you some years hence, unless a thorough present change is effected. Look at those cases (only too numerous and too apparent) in which indulged habits of ill-temper have become stronger by the lapse of time, and are not now softened in their aspect by the modifying influences of youth, of hope, of health. See those victims to habitual ill-humour, who are weighed down by the cares of a family, by broken health, by disappointed hopes, by the inevitably accumulating sorrows of life. Do you not know that they bestow wretchedness instead of happiness, even on those who are dearest and nearest to them? Do you not know that their voice is dreaded and unwelcome, as it sounds

through their home, deprived by their means of the lovely peace of home? Is not their step shunned in the passage, or on the stairs, in the certainty of no kind or cheerful greeting? Do you not observe that every subject but the most indifferent is avoided in their presence, or concealed from their knowledge, in the vain hope of keeping away food for their excitement of temper? Deprived of confidence, deprived of respect, their society avoided even by the few who still love them, the unfortunate victim of confirmed ill-temper may at last make some feeble efforts to shake off a once voluntarily imposed yoke. But, alas! it is too late; in feeble health, in advanced years, in depressed spirits, their powers of "working together with God" are altogether broken. They may be finally saved, indeed, but in this life they can never experience the peace that religion bestows on its faithful, self-controlling followers. They can never confer happiness, but always discomfort, on those whom they best love; they can never glorify God by bringing forth the fruits of "a meek and quiet spirit." This is sad, very sad, but it is not the less true. Strange also it is, in some respects, that when sin is deeply mourned over and anxiously prayed against, its power cannot be more effectually

weakened : but this is an invariable feature throughout all the dispensations of God, and you would do well to examine carefully into it, that you may add experience to your faith in the Scripture assertion, "What a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* May you be given grace to sow such present seed as may bring forth a harvest of peace to yourself, and peace to your friends !

I must not forget to make some observations with respect to those physical influences which affect the temper and spirits. It is true that these are, at some times, and for a short period, altogether irresistible. This is, however, only in the case of those whose character was not originally of sufficient force and strength to require much habitual self-control, as long as they possessed good health and spirits. When the original good health of such persons is altered in any way that alters their natural temper (but all diseases, even the severest, have not this effect), as they have had no previous practice in resisting the new and unaccustomed evil, they yield to it as hopelessly as they would to the pain attending the gout or the rheumatism. If, however, they are sincere in their desire to glorify God and to avoid disturbing the

* Galatians, vi. 7.

peace of those around them, they will soon learn to make use of all the means within reach to remedy the moral disease, as assiduously and as vigorously as they would labour to remedy that which is physical. Their newly-acquired self-control will be blest to them in more ways than one, for the grace of God is always given in proportion to the need of those who are willing to work themselves, and who have not incurred the evil they struggle against by wilful and deliberate sin.

I have spoken of only a few cases of ill-temper being irresistible, and even these few only to be considered so at first, before proper means of cure and prevention are used. Under other circumstances, though the ill-temper mourned over may be strongly influenced by physical causes, the sin must still remain the same as if the causes were strictly moral. For instance, if you know that by sitting up at night an hour or two later than usual, or by not taking regular exercise, or by eating of indigestible food, you will put it out of your power to avoid being ill-tempered and disagreeable on the following day, the failure is surely a moral one. That the immediate causes of your ill-humour may be physical, does not at all affect the matter, seeing that such causes are, in this case, completely

under your own control. It follows, therefore, that it must be a duty to watch carefully the effects produced on your temper by every habit of your life. If you do not abandon such of these as produce undesirable effects, you deserve to experience the consequences in the gradual diminution of the respect and affection of those who surround you.

Should the habits producing irritation of temper be such as cannot be relinquished without loss or detriment to yourself or others, the object in view will be equally attained by exercising a more vigilant self-control while you are exposed to a dangerous influence. For instance, you have often heard it remarked, and have perhaps observed in your own case, that poetry and works of fiction excite and irritate the temper. You may know some people who exhibit this influence so strongly that no one will venture to make them a request, or even to apply to them about necessary business, while they are engaged in the perusal of any thing interesting. I know more than one excellent person, who, in consequence of observing the effect produced on their temper by novels, &c., have given up this style of reading altogether. So far as the sacrifice was made from a conscientious

motive, they doubtless have their reward. But, judging from results, I should be rather inclined to think that they were in many cases not only mistaken in the nature of the precautions they adopted, but also in their motives for adopting them. Such persons too frequently seem to have no more control over their temper when exposed to other and entirely inevitable temptations, than they had before the cultivation of their imagination was given up. They do not, in short, seem to exercise, under circumstances they cannot escape, that vigilant self-control which would be the only safe test of the conscientiousness of their intellectual sacrifice.

For you, I should consider any sacrifice of the foregoing kind especially inexpedient. Your deep thoughtfulness of mind, and your habitual delicacy of health, make light literature especially important to you as an occupation; even were it right that you should abandon that species of mental cultivation which can only be effected by this branch of study. People who never read with intense application, and who are not very reflective by nature or habit, can little understand the necessity at times existing for entire repose to the higher powers of the intellect — a repose by few

means to be so effectually procured as by an interesting work of fiction. A drive in a pretty country, a friendly visit, an hour's work in the garden, — any of these may indeed effect the same purpose, and on some occasions in a safer way than a novel or a poem. The former, however, are means which are not always within one's reach, which are impossible at seasons when entire rest to the mind is most required, viz. during days and weeks of confinement to a sick and infected room. At such periods, it is true that the more idle the mind can be kept the better: even the most trifling story may excite a dangerous exertion of its nervous action; at times, however, when it is sufficiently strong and disengaged to feel a craving for active employment, it is of great importance that the employment should not involve any exercise of the higher intellectual faculties. I have known serious evils result to both mind and body from an imprudent engagement in intellectual pursuits during temporary, and as it may often appear trifling, illness. Whenever the body is weak, the mind also should be allowed to rest, if the invalid be a person of thought and reflection, otherwise Butler's Analogy itself would not do her any harm. It is *only* "Lorsqu'il y a vie, il y a danger."

This is a long digression, but one necessary to my subject, for I feel the importance of impressing on your mind that it can never be your duty to give up that which is otherwise expedient for you, on the grounds of its being a cause of excitement. You must only, under such circumstances, exercise a double vigilance over your temper. Thus you must try to avoid speaking in an irritated tone when you are interrupted; you must be always ready to help another, if it be otherwise expedient, however deep may be the interest of the book in which you are engaged; and, finally, if you are obliged to refuse your assistance, you should make a point of expressing your refusal with gentleness and courtesy.

You should show others, as well as be convinced of it yourself, that the refusal to oblige is altogether irrespective of any effect produced on your temper by the studies you are engaged in. Perhaps during the course of even this one day, you may have an opportunity of experiencing both the difficulty and advantage of attending to the foregoing directions.

In conclusion, I would remind you, that it may, some time or other, be the will of God to afflict you with heavy and permanent sickness, habitually affecting your temper, generating despondency, im-

patience, and irritation, and making the whole mind, as it were, one vast sore, shrinking in agony from every touch. If such a trial should ever be allotted to you (and it may be sent as a punishment for the neglect of your present powers of self-control), how can you avoid becoming a torment to all around you, and at the same time bringing doubt and ridicule on your profession of religion? If, during your present enjoyment of mental and bodily health, you do not acquire a mastery over your temper, it will be almost impossible to do so when the effects of disease are added to the influences of nature and habit. On the other hand, from Galen down to Sir Henry Hallford, there is high medical authority for the important fact that self-control acquired in health may be successfully exercised to subdue every external sign, at least, of the irritation and depression often considered inevitably attendant on many peculiar maladies. There are few greater temporal rewards of obedience than the consciousness, under such trying circumstances, of still possessing the power of procuring peace for oneself, love from one's neighbour, and glory to God.

Remember, finally, that every day and every hour you pause and hesitate about beginning to

control your temper, may probably expose you to years of more severe future conflict. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation," is equally true when asserted of the beginning of the slow moral process by which our own conformity "to the image of the Son" is effected, as of the saving moment in which we "arise and go to our Father." *

* Luke, xv.

LETTER III.

FALSEHOOD AND TRUTHFULNESS.

I DO not accuse you of being a liar, far from it ; on the contrary, I believe that if truth and falsehood were distinctly placed before you, and the opportunity of a deliberate choice afforded, you would rather expose yourself to serious injury than submit to the guilt of falsehood. It is, therefore, with the more regret that your conscientious friends observe a daily growing disregard of absolute truth in your statement of indifferent things, and *à plus forte raison*, in your statement of your own side of the question as opposed to that of another. There are, unfortunately, a thousand opportunities and temptations to the exaggerated mode of expression for which I blame you ; and these temptations are generally of so trifling a nature, that the whole energies of the conscience are never awakened to resist them, as might be the case were the evil to

others, and the disgrace to yourself, more strikingly manifest. Few people seem to be at all aware of the difficulties that really attend speaking the *exact* truth, or they would shrink from indulging in any habits that immeasurably increase these difficulties; increase them, indeed, to such a degree, that some minds appear to have lost the very power of perceiving truth, and, even when extremely anxious to give correct statements, show a total incapacity for transmitting a story to another in the way that they themselves received it. This is one of the most striking temporal punishments of sin, one of those that are the inevitable consequences of the sin itself, and quite independent of the other punishments which the revealed will of God attaches to it. The persons I speak of must, sooner or later, perceive that no dependence is placed on their statements; that, even if respect and affection for their other good qualities may prevent a clear recognition of their want of truthfulness, yet that they are never applied to for information on matters of any importance. Perhaps, to those who are sensitive in observation, such doubts are even the more painful the more vaguely they are implied. For myself, I have long acquired the habit of translating the assertions and the stories of the persons of whom I

speak, into the language in which I judge they originally existed. By the aid of a small degree of ingenuity, it is not very difficult to ascertain, from the nature of the refracting medium, the degree and the direction of the change that has taken place in the pure ray of truth.

Yet such people as these often deserve pity as much as blame; they are, perhaps, unconscious to what an extent habit has made them insensible to the perversion of truth in their statements; and even now they scarcely believe that what seems to them so true should appear, and really be, false to others. The intellectual effects of such habits are equally injurious with the moral ones. All natural clearness and distinctness of intellect becomes gradually obscured; the memory becomes perplexed; the very style of writing acquires the taint of the perverted mind. Truth is impressed upon every line of Dr. Arnold's vigorous diction, while other writers of perhaps equal, but less respectable, eminence betray, even in their mode of expression, the habitual want of honesty in their character and in their statements.

In your case, none of the habits I speak of are, as yet, firmly implanted. A warm temper, ardent feelings, and a vivid imagination are, as yet, the

only causes of your errors. You have still time and power to struggle against them, as the chains of habit have not been added to those of nature. But, before the struggle begins, you must be convinced of its necessity, and this is probably the point on which you are entirely incredulous. Listen to me, then, while I help you to discover the hidden mysteries of a heart that "is deceitful above all things;" and let the self-examination I urge upon you be prompt, be immediate. Let it be exercised through the day that is coming; watch the manner in which you express yourself on every subject; observe especially those temptations which will assail you to venture upon greater deviations from truth than those which you think you may harmlessly indulge in, under the sanction of vivid imagination, poetic fancy, &c. This latter part of the examination may throw great light on the subject: people are not assailed frequently and strongly by temptations that they have never yielded to at any former time.

I have reason to believe that, as one of the preparations for such self-examination, you entertain a deep sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and feel an anxious desire to approve yourself a faithful servant to your Heavenly Master. I do not,

therefore, suppose that at present any temptation would induce you to incur the guilt of a deliberate falsehood. The perception of moral evil may, however, be so blunted by habits of mere carelessness, that I should have no dependence on your adhering for many future years to even this degree of plain downright truth, unless those habits are decidedly broken through. But do not, from this, imagine that I consider a distinct decided falsehood more, but rather less, dangerous for the future of your character than the lighter errors I have spoken of. Though you may sink so far in course of time as to consider even a direct lie a very small transgression of the law of God, you will never be able to persuade yourself that it is entirely free from sin. The injury, too, to our neighbour, of a direct lie, can be so much more easily guarded against, that, for the sake of others, I am far more earnest in warning you against equivocation than against decided falsehood. It is sadly difficult for the injured person to ward off the effects of a deceitful glance, a misleading action, an artful insinuation. No earthly defence is of any avail here, as the sorrows of many a wounded heart can testify; but for such injured ones there is a sure, though it may be a long-suffering, Defender.

He is the Judge of all the earth ; and even in this world he will visit with a punishment inevitably involved in the consequences of their crime, those who have in any manner deceived their neighbour to his hurt.

I do not, however, accuse you of exaggerating or equivocating from malice alone ; no,—more frequently it is for the sake of mere amusement, or, at the worst, in cowardly self-defence ; that is, you prefer throwing the blame by insinuation upon an innocent person, to bearing courageously what you yourself deserve. In most cases, indeed, you can plead in excuse that the blame is not of any serious nature ; that the insinuated accusation is slight enough to be entirely harmless : so it may appear to you, but so it frequently happens not to be. The insinuated accusation, that appears to you unimportant, may have peculiar relations that make it more injurious to the slandered one than the original blame could have been to yourself. It may be the means of separating her from her chief friend, or shaking her influence in quarters where perhaps it was of great importance to her that it should be preserved unimpaired. When we lay sinful hands on the complicated machinery of

God's providence, it is impossible for us to see how far the derangement may extend.

During the course of this coming day, you may have an opportunity to give your own version of a matter in which another was concerned with you, and be tempted to throw the blame on one who will have no opportunity of defending herself. Be on your guard, then; have a noble courage; fear nothing but the meanness and the wickedness of accusing the absent and the defenceless. The opportunity offered you to-day of speaking conscientiously, however trifling it may in itself appear, is possibly the turning point of your life; leading you on to future practices of cowardice and deceit, or imparting to you new vigilance and energy for future victories over temptation.

You may, also, during the course of this day, be strongly tempted as to the mode of repeating what another has said in conversation: the slightest turn in the expression of the sentence, the insertion or omission of one little word, the change of a weaker to a stronger expression, may exactly adapt to your purpose the sentence you are tempted to repeat. Often, also, you may be able to say to yourself that the impression you are about to give was the real meaning of the speaker, only withheld by herself

because she had not courage to express it. Opportunities such as these are continually offering themselves to you ; and you have ingenuity enough to make the desired change in the repeated sentence so effectual, that there will be no danger of contradiction, even if the betrayed person should discover that she is called upon to defend herself. I have heard this so cleverly done, that the success was complete ; and the poor slandered one lost, in consequence, her admirer or her friend, or at least much of her influence over them. You, too, may in like manner succeed ; but what is the loss of others in comparison of the penalty of your success ? The punishment of successful sin is not to be escaped.

In any of the cases I here bring forward as illustrations, and as helps to your self-examination, I am not supposing that there is tangible, positive, wilful deceit in your heart, or that you deliberately contemplate very serious injury to the persons whose conversations and actions you misrepresent. On the contrary, I know that you are not thus hardened in sin. With regard, however, to the deceit not assuming any tangible form in your own eyes, you ought to remember the solemn words, "Thou, O God ! seest me ;" and what is sin in His eyes can

only fail to be so in ours from the neglect of strict self-examination and prayer that the Spirit of the Lord may search the very depths of the heart. Sins of ignorance seem to assume even a deeper dye than others, when the ignorance only arises from wilful neglect of the means of knowledge so abundantly and freely bestowed.

When you once begin in right earnest to try to speak the truth from your heart, in the smallest as well as in the greatest things, you will be surprised to find how difficult it is. Carelessness, false shame, a desire for admiration, a vanity that leads you to disclaim any interest in that which you cannot obtain ; — these are all temptations that beset your path, and ought to terrify you against adding the chains of habit to so many other difficulties.

I wish you to consider this subject in one more point of view ; that, namely, of “honesty being the best policy.” There is no falsehood that is not found out in the end, and so turned to the shame of the person guilty of it. Even at present, you may perpetually dread the eye of the discriminating observer : she can see through you even at the very moment of your committal of sin ; she quickly discovers that it is your habit to depreciate people or things, only because you are not in your turn

valued by them, or because you cannot obtain them; she can see, in a few minutes' conversation, that it is your habit to say that you are admired and loved, that your society is eagerly sought for by such and such people, whether it be the case or not. Quick observers discover in a first interview what others will not fail to discover after a time. They will then cease to depend upon you for information on any subject involving the interests of your vanity or your selfishness. They will turn up their eyes in admiration, from habit and politeness, not from belief. They will always suspect some hidden motive for your words, instead of that you put forward; nay, your giving one reason for your actions, will, by itself alone, set them on the search to discover a different one. All this, perhaps, will in many cases take place without their accusing you, even in their secret thoughts, of being a liar. They have only a vague consciousness that you are, it may be involuntarily, quite incapable of giving correct information.

The habitual, the known truth-speaker, occupies a proud position. Alas! a rare one, too! Alas! that, even among professedly religious people, there should be so few who speak the truth from the heart, — so few to whom one can turn with a fear-

less confidence to ask for information on any points of personal interest !

I need not be told that it is during childhood that the formation of strict habits of truthfulness is at once most sure and most easy. The difficulty is, indeed, increased ten-thousand-fold when the neglect of parents has suffered habits even of carelessness on this point to be contracted. But the difficulties, though great, are not insuperable to those who seek the freely offered grace of God to help them in the conflict. The resistance to temptation, the self-control, will indeed be more difficult when the effort begins later in life ; but the victory will be also the more glorious, and the general effects on the character more permanent and beneficial. Not that this serves as any excuse for the cruel neglect of parents ; for they can have no certainty that future repentance will be granted for those habits of sin whose formation they might have prevented.

Dwelling, however, even in thought, on the neglect of parents, can only lead to vain murmurings and complainings, and prevent the concentration of all energies and interest upon the extirpation of the very root of the evil.

In this case, as in all others, though the sin of the parent is surely visited on the children, the

very visitation is turned into a blessing for those who love God. To such blessed ones it proves the means of imparting greater strength and vigour to the character, from the perpetual conflicts to which it is exposed in its efforts to overcome early habits of evil.

Thus, even sin itself is not excepted from the "all things" that "work together for good to them that love God."*

* Romans, viii. 28.

LETTER IV.

ENVY.

It is, perhaps, an "unknown friend" only who would venture to address a remonstrance to you on the particular sin forming the subject of the following pages; for it seems equally acknowledged by those who are guilty of it, and those who are entirely free from its taint, that there is no bad quality meaner, more degrading, than that of envy. Who, therefore, could venture openly to accuse another of such a failing, however kind and disinterested the motive, and still be admitted to rank as her friend?

There is, besides, a strong impression that, where this failing does exist, it is so closely interwoven with the whole texture of the character, that it can never be separated from it while life and this body of sin remain. This is undoubtedly thus far true, that its ramifications are more minute, and

more universally pervading, than those of any other moral defect; so that, on the one hand, while even an anxious and diligent self-examination cannot always detect their existence, so, on the other, it is scarcely possible for its victims to be excited by an emotion of any nature with which envy will not, in some manner or other, connect itself. It is still further true, that no vice can be more difficult of extirpation, the form it assumes being seldom sufficiently tangible to allow of the whole weight of religious and moral motives being brought to bear upon it. But the greatest difficulty of all is, in my mind, the inadequate conception of the exceeding evil of this disposition, of the misery it entails on ourselves, the danger and the constant annoyance to which it exposes all connected with us. Few would recognise their own picture, however strong the likeness in fact might be, in the following vivid description of Lavater's:—"Lorsque je cherche à représenter Satan, je me figure une personne que les bonnes qualités d'autrui font souffrir, et qui se réjouit des fautes et des malheurs du prochain." But analyse strictly, during even this one day, the feelings that have given you the most annoyance, and the contemplated or executed measures of deed or word to

When I try to represent Satan, I imagine a person who is pained by the good of others and rejoices in the faults and misfortunes of the next.

which those feelings have prompted you, and you must plead guilty to the heinous charge of "re-joicing at your brother's faults and misfortunes." It is not so much, indeed, with relation to important matters that this feeling is excited. If you hear of your friends being left large fortunes, or forming connections calculated to promote their happiness, you are not always annoyed or grieved: you may even, perhaps, experience some sensations of pleasure. But the circumstances of good fortune are brought more home to yourself, perhaps into collision with yourself, by being of a more trifling nature; you often experience a regret or annoyance at the moderate success or the moderate happiness of others which would be ludicrous if it were not so wicked. There is no vice which displays itself more readily to the keen eye of observation: even when the guarded tongue restrains the disclosure, the expression of the lip and eye is unmistakable, and gradually impresses a character on the countenance which remains when the feeling itself is quite dormant.

Only contemplate your case in this point of view: is it not, when dispassionately considered, shocking to think that when a stranger hopes to gratify you by the praise, the judicious and well-merited praise,

of some dear friend, a pang is inflicted on you by the very words that ought to sound as pleasant music in your ears? I have even heard some persons so incautious, under such circumstances, as to qualify the praise that gives them pain, by detracting from the merits of the person under discussion, though that person be their particular friend. This is done in a variety of ways: her merits and advantages may be accounted for by the peculiarly favouring circumstances in which she has been placed; different disparaging opinions entertained of her, by other people better qualified to judge, may also be mentioned. Now, many persons thus imprudent are by no means utterly foolish at other times; yet, in the moment of temptation from their besetting sin, they do not observe how inevitable it is, that the stranger so replied to should immediately detect their unamiable motives, and estimate them accordingly.

You will not, perhaps, fall into so open a snare, for you have sufficient tact and quickness of perception to know that, under such circumstances, you must on your own account bury in your bosom those emotions of pain which I much fear you will generally feel. It is not, however, the outward expression of such emotions, but their inward ex-

perience, which is the real question we are considering, both as regards your present happiness and your eternal interest. Ask yourself whether it is a pleasurable sensation, or the contrary, when those you love (I am still putting a strong case) are admired and appreciated, are held up as examples of excellence? If you love truly, if you are free from envy, such praise will be far sweeter to your ears than any bestowed on yourself could ever be. Indeed, it might be considered a sufficient punishment for this vice, to be deprived of the deep and virtuous sensation of delight experienced by the loving heart when admiration is warmly expressed for the objects of its affection.

There has been a time when I should have scornfully rejected the supposition, that such a failing as envy could exist in companionship with aught that was loveable or amiable. But more observation of character has given me the unpleasant conviction that it may occasionally be found in the close neighbourhood of contrasting excellences. Alas! instead of being concealed or gradually overgrown by them, it, on the contrary, spreads its deadly blight over any noble features that may have originally existed in the character. Nothing but the severest dis-

cipline, external and internal, can arrest this its natural course.

When you were younger, the feelings I now warn you against were called jealousy, and even now some indulgent friends may continue to give them this false name. Do not you suffer the dangerous delusion. Have the courage to place your feelings in all their natural deformity before you, and this sight will give you energy to pursue any regimen, however severe, that may be required to subdue them.

I do really believe that it is the false name of jealousy that prevents many an early struggle against the real vice of envy. I have heard young women even boast of the jealousy of their disposition, insinuating that it was to be considered as a proof of warm feelings and an affectionate heart. Perhaps genuine jealousy may deserve to be so considered; the anxious watching over even imaginary diminution of affection or esteem in those we love and respect, the vigilance to detect the slightest external manifestation of any diminution in their tenderness and regard, though proving a deficiency in that noble faith which is the surest safeguard and the firmest foundation of love and friendship, may in some cases be an evidence of affection and warmth

in the disposition and the heart. But so close is the connection between envy and jealousy, that the latter in one moment may change into the former. The most watchful circumspection, therefore, is required, lest that which is, even in its best form, a weakness and an instrument of misery to ourselves and others, should still further degenerate into a meanness and a vice;—as, for instance, when you fear that the person you love may be induced, by seeing the excellences of another, to withdraw from you some of the time, admiration, and affection you wish to be exclusively bestowed upon yourself. In this case there is a strong temptation to display the failings of the dreaded rival, or, at the best, to feel no regret at their chance display. Under such circumstances, even the excusable jealousy of affection passes over into the vice of envy. The connection between them is, indeed, in all cases dangerously close; but it is easy to trace the boundary line if we are inclined to do so. Jealousy is contented with the affection and admiration of those it loves and respects; envy is in despair if those whom it despises bestow the least portion of attention or admiration on those whom perhaps she despises still more. Jealousy inquires only into the feelings of the few valued ones; envy makes no distinction in her

cravings for universal preference. The very attentions and admiration which were considered valueless, nay troublesome, as long as they were bestowed on herself, become of exceeding importance when they are transferred to another. Envy would make use of any means whatever to win back the friend or the admirer whose transferred attentions were giving some one else pleasure. The power of inflicting pain and disappointment on one whose superiority is envied, bestows on the object of former indifference, or even contempt, a new and powerful attraction. This is very wicked, very mean, you will say, and shrink back in horror from the supposition of any resemblance to the characters I have just described. Alas! your indignation may be honest, but it is without foundation. Already those earlier symptoms are constantly appearing, which, if not sternly checked, must in time grow into hopeless deformity of character. There is nothing that undermines all virtuous and noble qualities more surely or more insidiously than the indulged vice of envy. Its unresisting victims become by degrees capable of every species of detraction, until they lose even the power of discerning excellence. They become, too, incapable of all generous self-denial and self-sacrifice; feelings of

bitterness towards every successful rival (and there are few who may not be our rivals on some one point or other) gradually diffuse themselves throughout the heart, and leave no place for that love of our neighbour stated by the Scriptures to be the test of love to God.*

Unlike most other vices, envy can never want an opportunity of indulgence : so that, unless it is early detected and vigilantly controlled, its rapid growth is inevitable.

Early detection is the first point, and in that I am most anxious to assist you. Perhaps, till now, the possibility of your being guilty of the vice of envy has never entered your thoughts. When any thing resembling it has forced itself on your notice, you have probably given it the name of Jealousy, and have attributed the painful emotions it excited to the too tender susceptibilities of your nature. Ridiculous as such self-deception is, I have seen too many instances of it to doubt the probability of its being practised by you.

I am not in general an advocate for the minute analysis of mental emotions : their vitality generally evaporates during the process, as in anatomy the principle of life escapes during the

* 1 John, iii.

most vigilant anatomical examination. In the case, however, of seeking the detection of a before unknown failing, a strict mental inquiry must necessarily be instituted. The many great dangers of mental anatomy may be partly avoided by confining your observations to the external symptoms, instead of the state of mind whence they proceed. This will be the safer as well as the more effectual mode of bringing conviction home to your mind. For instance, I would have you watch the emotions excited when enthusiastic praise is bestowed upon another, with relation to those very qualities you are the most anxious should be admired in yourself. When the conversation or the accomplishments of another fix the attention which was withheld from your own,—when the opinion of another, with whom you fancy yourself on an equality, is put forward as deserving of being followed in preference to your own, I can imagine you possessed of sufficient self-respect to restrain any external tokens of envy; you will not insinuate, as meaner spirits would do, that the extolled beauty, dress, or accomplishments are preserved, cherished, and cultivated, at the expense of time, kindly feelings, and the duty of almsgiving—that the conversation is considered by many competent judges flippant, or pedantic, or

presuming — that the opinion cannot be of much value when the conduct has been in many instances so deficient in prudence.

These are all remarks envy may easily find an opportunity of insinuating against any of its rivals; but, as I said before, I imagine that you have too much self-respect to manifest openly such feelings, to reveal such meanness, to the eyes of man. Alas! you have not an equal fear of the all-seeing eye of God. What I apprehend most for you is, the allowing yourself to cherish secretly all these palliative circumstances, that you may thus reconcile yourself to a superiority that mortifies you. If you habitually allow yourself in this practice, it will be almost impossible to avoid feeling pleasure instead of pain when these same circumstances happen to be pointed out by others; when you have thus all the benefit, and none of the guilt or shame, of disclosure. When envy is freely allowed to take these two first steps, a further progress is inevitable. Self-respect itself will not long preserve you from outward demonstrations of that which is inwardly indulged, and you are sure to become in time the object of just contempt and ridicule. It will soon be well known that the surest way to inflict pain upon you is to extol the excellences, or to dwell

on the happiness, of others; and your failings will be considered an amusing subject for jesting observation to experimentalise upon. I have often watched the downward progress just described; and, unless the grace of God, working with your own capabilities for vigorous self-control, should alter your present frame of mind, I see no reason why you should escape when others inevitably fall.

This vice nowhere manifests itself so painfully and dangerously as in the members of a large family. How deplorable is it, when, instead of making each separate interest the interest of the whole, and rejoicing in the love and admiration bestowed on each separate individual as if it were bestowed on the whole, such love, and such admiration, excites, on the contrary, irritation and regret!

Amongst children this evil seldom attracts notice; if one girl is praised for dancing or singing much better than her sister, and the sister taunted into further efforts by insulting comparisons, the poor mistaken parent little thinks that, in the pain she inflicts on the depreciated child, she is implanting a perennial root of danger and sorrow. The child may cry and sob at the time, and afterward feel uncomfortable in the presence of one whose superiority has been made the means of worrying her,

and, if envious by nature, she will probably take the first opportunity of pointing out to the teachers any little error of her sister's; but the serious injury remains to be effected when they both grow to woman's estate. The envious sister will then take every artful opportunity of lessening the influence of the one who is considered her superior, of insinuating charges against her to those whose good opinion they both value the most. And she is only too easily successful; she is successful, that success may bring upon her the penalty of her sin, for Heaven is then the most incensed against us when our sin appears to prosper. And various and inexhaustible are the mere temporal punishments of this sin of envy; of the sin which deprives another of even one shade of the admiration, influence, and affection they would otherwise have enjoyed.

If the preference of a female friend excites angry and jealous feelings, the attentions of an admirer are probably still more envied. In some unhappy families, one may observe the beginning of any such attentions by the vigilant depreciation of the admirer, and the anxious manœuvres to prevent any opportunities of cultivating the detected preference. What prosperity can be hoped

for to a family in which the supposed advantage and happiness of one individual member is feared and guarded against, instead of being considered an interest belonging to the whole? You will be shocked at such pictures as these: alas! that they should be so frequent even in domestic England, the land of happy homes and strong family ties! You are of course still more shocked at hearing that I attribute to yourself any shade of so disgraceful a vice as that above described; and as long as you do not attribute it to yourself, my warning voice will be raised in vain. I am not, however, without hope, that the vigilant self-examination, which your real wish for improvement will probably soon render habitual, may open your eyes to your danger while it can still be easily averted. Supposing this to be the case, I would earnestly suggest to you the following means of cure. First, earnest prayer against this particular sin; earnest prayer to be brought into "a higher moral atmosphere," one of unfeigned love to our neighbour, one of rejoicing with all who do rejoice, and weeping with those who weep. This general habit is of the greatest importance to cultivate: we should strive naturally and instinctively to feel pleasure when another is loved, or praised, or fortunate; we should try to

strengthen our sympathies, to make the feelings of others, as much as possible, our own. Many an early emotion of envy might be instantly checked by throwing one's self into the position of the envied one, by exerting the imagination to conceive vividly the pleasure or the pain she must experience: this will, even at the time, make us forgetful of self, and will gradually bring us into the habit of feeling for the pain and pleasure of others, as if we really believed them to be members of the same mystical body.* We should, in the next place, attack the symptoms of the vice we wish to eradicate; we should seek by reasonable considerations to realise the absurdity of our envy: for this, nothing is more essential than the ascertaining of our own level, and fairly making up our minds to the certain superiority of others. As soon as this is distinctly acknowledged, much of the pain of the inferior estimation in which we are held will be removed: "There is no disgrace in being eclipsed by Jupiter." Next, let us examine into the details of the law of compensation, one which is never infringed; let us consider that the very superiority of others involves many unpleasantnesses, of a kind, perhaps, the most dis-

* 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.

agreeable to us. For instance, it often involves the necessity of a sacrifice of time and feelings, and almost invariably produces isolation, — consequences from which we, perhaps, should fearfully shrink. On the brilliant conversationist is inflicted the penalty of never enjoying a rest in society: her expected employment is to amuse others, not herself. The beauty is the dread of all the jealous wives and anxious mothers, and the object of a notice almost incompatible with happiness: I never saw a happy beauty, did you? The great genius is shunned and feared by, perhaps, the very people she is most desirous to attract; the exquisite musician is asked into society *en artiste*, expected to contribute a certain species of amusement, the world refusing to receive any other from her. The woman who is surrounded by admirers is often wearied to death by attentions which lose all their charm with their novelty, and which frequently serve to deprive her of the only affection she really values. Experience will convince you of the great truth, that there is a law of compensation in all things. The same law also holds good with regard to the preferences shown to those who have no superiority over us, who are nothing more than our equals in beauty, in cleverness, in

accomplishments. If Ellen B. or Lydia C. is liked more than you are by one person, you, in your turn, will be preferred by another: no one who seeks for affection and approbation, and who really deserves it, ever finally fails of acquiring it. You have no right to expect that every one should like you the best: if you considered such expectations in the abstract, you would be forced to acknowledge their absurdity. Besides, would it not be a great annoyance to you to give up your time and attention to conversing with, or writing to, the very people whose preference for Ellen B. or Lydia C. you envy? They are suited to each other, and like each other: in good time you will meet with people who suit you, and who will consequently like you; nay, perhaps at this present moment, you may have many friends who delight in your society, and admire your character;—will you lose the pleasure such blessings are intended to confer, by envying the preferences shown to others? Bring the subject distinctly and clearly home to your mind. Whenever you feel an emotion of pain, have the courage to trace it to its source, place this emotion in all its meanness before you; then think how ridiculous it would appear to you if you contemplated it in another. Finally, ask your-

self whether there can be any indulgence of such feelings in a heart that is bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,—whether there can be any room for them in the temple wherein the Spirit of God dwelleth.*

* 1 Cor. iii. 16.

LETTER V.

SELFISHNESS AND UNSELFISHNESS.

THIS is a difficult subject to address you upon, and one which you will probably reject as unsuited to yourself. There are few qualities the possessor is less likely to be conscious of than either selfishness or unselfishness ; because the actions proceeding from either are so completely instinctive, so unregulated by any appeal to principle, that they never, in the common course of things, attract any particular notice. We go on, therefore, strengthening ourselves in the habits of either, until a double nature, as it were, is formed, overlaying the first, and equally powerful with it.—How unlovely in the case of selfishness, even where there are, besides, fine and striking features in the general character ; and how lovely in the case of unselfishness, even when, as too frequently happens, there is little comparative strength or nobleness in its intellectual and moral accompaniments.

You are now young, you are affectionate, good-natured, obliging, possessed of gay and happy spirits, and a sweetness of temper seldom seen united with so much sparkling wit and lively sensibilities. Altogether, then, you are considered a very attractive person, and in the love which all those qualities have won for you from those around may bring forward strong evidence against my charge of selfishness. But is it not by those who are not brought into daily and hourly collision with you that this love is more especially felt? They only see you bright with good-humour, ready to talk, to laugh, and to make merry with them in any way they please. They therefore, in all probability, do not think you selfish. Are you certain, however, that the estimate formed of you by your nearest relatives will not be that of even your acquaintance some years hence, when lessened good-humour, and strengthened habits of selfishness, have brought out into more striking relief the natural faults of your character?

The selfishness of the gay, amusing, good-humoured girl is often unobserved, almost always tolerated; but when youth, beauty, and vivacity are gone, the vice appears in its native deformity, and she who indulges it becomes as unlovely as

unloved. It is for the future you have cause to fear,—a future for which you are preparing gloom and dislike by the habits you now form in the small details of daily life, as well as in the pleasurable excitements of social intercourse. As I said before, these, at present almost imperceptible, habits are unheeded by those who are only your acquaintance: but they are not the less sowing the seeds of your future unhappiness. You will, assuredly, at some period or other, reap in dislike what you are now sowing in selfishness. If, however, the warning voice of an “unknown friend” is attended to, there is yet time for a complete and comparatively easy victory over this, your besetting sin; while, on the contrary, every week’s and every month’s delay, by riveting more strongly the chains of habit, increases at once your difficulties and your consequent discouragement.

This day, this very hour, the conflict ought to begin: but, alas! how may this be when you are not yet even aware of the existence of the danger I warn you against. It is most truly “a part of sin to be unconscious of itself.”* It will also be doubly difficult to effect the necessary preliminary of convincing you of selfishness when I am so

* Archdeacon Manning.

situated as not to be able to point out to you with certainty any particular act indicative of the vice in question. This obliges me to enter into more varied details, to touch a thousand different strings, in the hope that amongst so many I may by chance touch upon the right one.

Now it is a certain fact, that, in such inquiries as the present, enemies may be of much more use to us than friends. They may, they generally do, exaggerate our faults, but the exaggeration gives them a relief and depth of colouring which may enable the accusation to force its way through the dimness and heavy-sightedness of our self-deception. Examine yourself, then, with respect to those accusations brought against you by others in moments of anger and excitement; place yourself in the situation of the injured party, and ask yourself whether you would not attach the blame of selfishness to similar conduct in another person. For instance, you may perhaps be seated in a comfortable chair by a comfortable fire, reading an interesting book, and a brother or sister comes in to request that you will help in packing something or writing something that must be finished at a certain time, something that cannot be done without your assistance; the interruption alone,

at a critical part of the story, or in the middle of an abstruse and interesting argument, is enough to irritate your temper and to disqualify you for listening with an unprejudiced ear to the request that is made to you. You answer, probably, in a tone of irritation; you say that it is impossible, that the business ought to have been attended to earlier, and that they could then have concluded it without your assistance; or perhaps you rise and go with them, and execute the thing to be done in a most ungracious manner, with a pouting lip and a surly tone, insinuating, too, for days afterwards, how much you had been annoyed and inconvenienced. The case would have been different if a stranger had made the request of you, or a friend, or any one but a near and probably very dear relative. In the former case, there would have been, first, the excitement which always in some degree distinguishes social from mere family intercourse; there would have been the wish to keep up their good opinion of your character, which they may have been deluded into considering the very reverse of unselfish. Lastly, their thanks would of course be more warm than those you are likely to receive from a relative (who instinctively feels it to be your duty to help in the

family labours), and thus your vanity would have been sufficiently gratified to reconcile you to the trouble and interruption to which you had been exposed.

Still further, it is, perhaps, only to your own family you would have indulged in that introductory irritation of which I have spoken. We have all witnessed cases in which inexcusable excitement has been displayed towards relatives or servants who have announced unpleasant interruptions in the shape of an unwelcome visitor; while the moment afterwards the real offender has been greeted with an unclouded brow and a warm welcome, she not having the misfortune of being so closely connected with you as the innocent victim of your previous ill-temper.

I enter into these minute particulars, not because they are necessarily connected with selfishness,—for many unselfish, generous-minded people are the unfortunate victims of ill-temper, to which vice the preceding traits of character more peculiarly belong,—but for the purpose of showing you that your conduct towards strangers can be no test of your unselfishness. It is only in the more trying details of daily life that the existence of the vice or the virtue can be evidenced. It is, nevertheless, upon quali-

ties so imperceptible to yourself as to require this close scrutiny that most of the happiness and comfort of domestic life depends.

You know the story of the watch that had been long out of order, and the cause of its irregularity not to be discovered. At length, one watchmaker, more ingenious than the rest, suggested that a magnet might, by some chance, have touched the mainspring. By experiment this was ascertained to be the case; the casual and temporary neighbourhood of a magnet had deranged the whole complicated machinery; and on equally imperceptible, often undiscoverable, trifles does the healthy movement of the mainspring of domestic happiness depend. Observe, then, carefully every irregularity in its motion, and exercise your ingenuity to discover the cause in good time; the derangement may otherwise soon become incurable, both by the strengthening of your own habits, and the dispositions towards you they will impress on the minds of others.

Let me entreat you, then, to watch yourself during the course of even this one day—first, for the purpose of ascertaining whether my accusation of selfishness is or is not well-founded, and afterwards, for the purpose of seeking to eradicate from

your character every taint of so unlovely, and, for the credit of the sex I may add, so unfeminine a failing.

Before we proceed further on this subject, I must attempt to lay down a definition of selfishness, lest you should suppose that I am so mistaken as to confound with the vice above named that self-love, which is at once an allowable instinct and a positive duty.

Selfishness, then, I consider as a perversion of the natural and divinely impressed instinct of self-love. It is a desire for things not really good for us, followed by an endeavour to obtain those things to the injury of our neighbour.* Where a sacrifice which benefits your neighbour can inflict no *real* injury on yourself, it would be selfishness not to make the sacrifice. On the contrary, where either one or the other must suffer an equal injury (equal in all points of view—in permanence, in powers of endurance, &c.), self-love requires that you should here prefer yourself. You have no right to sacrifice your own health, your own happiness, or your own life, to preserve the health, or the life, or the happiness of another; for none of these things are your

* See Bishop Butler's Sermons.

own, they are only entrusted to your stewardship to be made the best use of for God's glory. Your health is given you that you may have the free disposal of all your mental and bodily powers to employ them in His service; your happiness, that you may have energy to diffuse peace and cheerfulness around you; your life, that you may "work out your salvation with fear and trembling." We read of fine sacrifices of the kind I deprecate in novels and romances; we may admire them in heathen story; but with such sacrifices the real Christian has no concern. He must not give away that which is not his own. "Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*

In the case of a sacrifice of life—which, of course, can very rarely occur—the dangerous results of thus, as it were, taking events out of the hand of God cannot be always visible to our sight at present: we should, however, contemplate what they might possibly be. Let us consider the injury that may result to the self-sacrificer, throughout the countless ages of eternity, from the loss of that working time of hours, days, and years, wilfully

* 1 Cor. vi. 20.

flung from him for the uncertain benefit of another. Yes, uncertain, for that other may then be in a state of greater meetness for Heaven than he will ever again enjoy; there may be future fearful temptations, and consequent falling into sin, from which he would have been preserved if his death had taken place when the providence of God seemed to will it. Of course, none of us can, by the most wilful disobedience, dispose events in any way but exactly that which His hand and His counsel have determined before the foundation of the world*: but when we go out of the narrow path of duty, we attempt, as far as in us lies, to reverse His unchangeable decrees, and we "have our reward:" we mar our own welfare, and that of others, when we make any effort to take the providing for it out of the hands of the Omnipotent.

It is, however, only for the establishment of a principle that it could be necessary to discuss the duties involved in such rare emergencies. I shall therefore proceed without further delay to the more common sacrifices I have spoken of, and explain to you what I mean by such sacrifices.

I have alluded to those of health and happiness.

* Acts, iv. 28.

We have all known the first wilfully thrown away by needless attendance on such sick friends as would have been equally well taken care of had servants or hired nurses shared in the otherwise overpowering labour. Often is this labour found to incapacitate the nurse-tending friend from fulfilling towards the convalescent those offices in which no menial could supply her place—such as the cheering of the drooping spirit, the selection and patient perusal of amusing books, an animated amusing companionship in walks and drives, the humouring of a sick fancy—a sickness that often increases as that of the body decreases. For all these trying duties during the often long and always painfully tedious period of convalescence the nightly watcher of the sick-bed has most probably unfitted herself. The affection and devotion useless and unheeded during days and nights of stupor and delirium, have probably by this time worn out the weak body which they have been exciting to efforts beyond its strength, so that it is now incapable of more useful demonstrations of attachment. Far be it from me to depreciate that fond devoted watching of love which is sometimes even a compensation to the invalid for the sufferings of sickness; at periods, too, when hired attendance could not be tolerated,

Here woman's love and devotion are often brightly shown. The natural impulses of her heart lead her to trample under foot all consideration of personal danger, fatigue, or weakness, when the need of her loved ones demands her exertions.

This, however, is comparatively easy ; it is only following the instincts of her loving nature never to leave the sick-room, where all her hopes and fears are centred,—never to breathe the fresh air of heaven,—never to mingle in the social circle,—never to rest the weary limbs, or close the languid eye. The excitement of love and anxiety makes all this easy as long as the anxiety itself lasts ; but when danger is removed and the more trying duties of tending the convalescent begin, the genuine devotion of self-denial and unselfishness is put to the test.

Nothing is more difficult than to bear with patience the apparently unreasonabable depression and ever-varying whims of the peevish convalescent, whose powers of self-control have been prostrated by long bodily exhaustion. Nothing is more trying than to find anxious exertions for her comfort and amusement either entirely unnoticed and useless, or received with petulant contradiction and ungrateful irritation. Those who have themselves experienced

the helplessness caused by disease, well know how bitterly the trial is shared by the invalid herself. How deeply she often mourns over the unreasonableness and irritation she is without power to control, what tears of anguish she sheds in secret over those acts of neglect and words of unkindness which she knows her own ill-humour and apparent ingratitude have unintentionally provoked.

Those who feel the sympathy of experience will surely wish, under all such circumstances, to exercise untiring patience and unremitting attention; but, however strong this wish may be, they cannot execute their purpose if their own health has been injured by previous unnecessary watchings, by exclusion from fresh air and exercise. Those whose nervous system has been thus unstrung will never be equal to the painful exertions now called for by the recovering invalid. How much better it would have been for her if walks and sleep had been taken at times when an attentive nurse would have done just as well to sit at the bed-side, when absence would have been unnoticed, or only temporarily regretted! Such prudent, and, we must remember, generally self-denying care of one's self would have averted the future bodily illness or nervous depression of the nurse of the convalescent, at a time,

too, when the latter has become painfully alive to every look and word, as well as act, of diminished attention and watchfulness; you will surely feel deep self-reproach if, from any cause, you are unable to control your own temper, and to bear with cheerful patience the petulance of hers.

I have dwelt so long on this part of my subject, because I think it very probable that, with your warm affections, and before your selfishness has been hardened by habits of self-indulgence, you might some time or other fall into the error I have described. In the ardour of your anxiety for some beloved relative, you may be induced to persevere in such close attendance on the sick-bed as seriously to injure your own health and unfit you for more useful, certainly more self-denying, exertion afterwards. How much easier is it to spend days and nights by the sick-bed of one from whom we are in hourly dread of a final separation, and whose helpless and suffering state excites the strongest feelings of compassion and anxiety, than to sit by the sofa, or walk by the side, of the same invalid when she has regained just sufficient strength to experience discomfort in every thing; — when she never finds her sofa arranged, or placed to her satisfaction; is never pleased with the carriage, or

the drive, or the walk you have chosen ; is never interested in the book or the conversation with which you anxiously and laboriously try to amuse her ! Here it is that woman's power of endurance, that the real strength and nobleness of her character, is put to the most difficult test. Well, too, has this test been borne : right womanly has been the conduct of many a loving wife, mother, and sister, under the trying circumstances above described. Woman alone, perhaps, can steadily maintain the clear vision of what the beloved one really is, and can patiently view the wearisome ebullitions of ill-temper and discontent as symptoms equally physical with a cough or a hectic flush.

This noble picture of self-control can be realised only by those who keep even the best instincts of a woman's nature under the government of strict principle, remembering that the most beautiful of these instincts may not be followed without guidance or restraint. Whoever yields to such instincts without reflection and self-denial will exhaust her physical energies before the time comes for the fulfilment of duties.

The third branch of my subject is the most difficult. It may, indeed, appear strange that we should not have the right to sacrifice our own

happiness : that surely belongs to us to dispose of, if nothing else does. Besides, happiness is evidently not the state of being intended for us here below ; and that much higher state of mind from which all "*hap*"* is excluded—viz. blessedness—is seldom granted, unless the other is altogether withdrawn.

You must, however, observe that this blessedness is only granted when the lower state—that of happiness—could not be preserved except by a positive breach of duty, or when it is withheld or destroyed by the immediate interposition of God Himself, as in the case of death, separation, incurable disease, &c. Under any of the above circumstances we have the sure promise of God, "As thy days are, so shall thy strength be." The lost and mourned happiness will not be allowed to deprive us of the powers of rejoicing in hope and serving God in peace ; also of diffusing around us the cheerfulness and contentment which are amongst the most important of Christian duties. These privileges, however, we must not expect to enjoy, if by a mistaken unselfishness (often deeply stained with pride) we sacrifice to another the happiness that lay in our

* Coleridge's Aids to Reflection.

own path, and which may, in reality, be prejudicial to them, as it was not intended for them by Providence; while, on the contrary, it may have been by the same Providence intended for us as the necessary drop of sweetness in the otherwise overpowering bitterness of our earthly cup.

We take, as it were, the disposal of our fate out of the hands of God as much when we refuse the happiness He sends us as when we turn aside from the path of duty on account of some rough passage we see there before us. Good and evil both come from the hands of the Lord. We should be watchful to receive every thing exactly in the way He sees it fit for us.

Experience, as well as theory, confirms the truth of the above assertions. Consider even your own case with relation to any sacrifice of your real happiness to the supposed happiness of another. I can imagine this possible even in a selfish disposition, not yet hardened. Your good-nature, warm feelings, and pride (in you a powerfully actuating principle) may at times have induced you to make, in moments of excitement, sacrifices of which you have not fully "counted the cost." Let us, then, examine this point in relation to yourself, and to the petty sacrifices of daily life. If you have al-

lowed others to encroach too much on your time, if you have given up to them your innocent pleasures, your improving pursuits and favourite companions, has this indulgence of their selfishness really added to their happiness? Has it not rather been unobserved, except so far as to increase the unreasonableness of their expectations from you, to make them angry when it at last becomes necessary to resist their advancing encroachments? On your own side, too, has it not rather tended to irritate you against people whom you formerly liked, because you are suffering from the daily and hourly pressure of the sacrifices you have imprudently made for them? Believe me, there can be no peace or happiness in domestic life without a *bien entendu* self-love, always found by intelligent experience to be a preservative from selfishness, instead of a manifestation of it.

From all that I have already said, you will, I hope, infer that I am not likely to recommend any extravagant social sacrifices, or to bring you in guilty of selfishness for actions not really deserving of the name. Indeed, I have said so much on the other side, that I may now have some difficulty in proving that, while defending self-love, I have not been defending you. We must therefore go back to

my former definition of selfishness—namely, a seeking for ourselves that which is not our real good, to the neglect of all consideration for that which is the real good of others. This is viewing the subject *en grand*,—and is a very general definition indeed, but not a vague one; for all the following illustrations from the minor details of life may clearly be classed under this head.

These are the sort of illustrations I always prefer—they come home so much more readily to the heart and mind. Will not some of the following come home to you? The indulgence of your indolence by sending a tired person on a message when you are very well able to go yourself—sending a servant away from her work which she has to finish within a certain time—keeping your maid standing to bestow much more than needful decoration on your dress, hair, &c., at a time when she is weak or tired—driving one way for your own mere amusement, when it is a real inconvenience to your companion not to go another—expressing or acting on a disinclination to accompany your friend or sister when she cannot go alone—refusing to give up a book always within your reach to another who may have only this opportunity of reading it—walking too far or too fast to the inconvenience of a tired or

delicate companion—refusing, or only consenting with ill-humour, to write a letter, or to do a piece of work, or to entertain a visitor, or to pay a visit, when the person whose more immediate business it is, has, from want of time, and not from idleness or laziness, no power to do what she requests of you—dwelling on all the details of a painful subject, for the mere purpose of giving vent to and thus relieving your own feelings, though it may be by harrowing up those of others who are less able to bear it. All these are indeed trifles—but

(“Trifles make the sum of human things,”*)

and are sure to occur every day, and to form the character into such habits as will fit or unfit it for great proofs of unselfishness, should such be ever called for.

Besides, it is on trifles such as these that the smoothness of “the current of domestic joy” depends. It is a smoothness easily disturbed: let not your hand be the one to do it.

In all the trifling instances of selfishness above enumerated, I have generally supposed that a request has been made to you; that you have not

* Hannah More.

the trouble of finding out the exact manner in which you can conquer selfishness for the advantage of your neighbour. I must now, however, remind you that one of the penalties incurred by past indulgence in selfishness is this, that those who love you will not continue to make those requests which you have been in the habit of refusing, or, if you ever complied with them, of reminding the obliged person, from time to time, to how much inconvenience your compliance has subjected you. This, I fear, may have been your habit ; for selfish people exaggerate so much every "little" (by "the good man") "nameless unremembered act" that they never consider them gratefully enough impressed on the heart of the receiver without frequent reminders from themselves. If such has been the case, you must not expect the frank confiding request, the entire trust in your willingness to make any not unreasonable sacrifice, with which the unselfish are gratified and rewarded, and for which perhaps you often envy them, though you would not take the trouble to deserve the same confidence yourself. Even should you now begin the attempt, and begin it in all earnestness, it will take some time to establish your new character. *En attendant*, you must be on the watch for opportunities of obliging others,

for they will not be freely offered to you : you must now exercise your own observation to find out what they would once have frankly told you—whether you are tiring people physically or distressing them morally, or putting them to practical inconvenience. I do not make the extravagant supposition that all those you associate with have attained to Christian perfection ; the proud and the resentful, as well as the delicate-minded, will suffer much rather than repeat appeals to your unselfishness which have been before often disregarded. They may exercise the Christian duty of forgiveness in other ways, but this is the most difficult of all. Few can attain to it, and you must not expect it in your ordinary associates.

Finally, I wish to warn you against believing those who tell you that such minute analysis of motives, such scrutiny into the smallest details of daily conduct, has a tendency to produce an unhealthy self-consciousness. This might, indeed, be true, if the original state of your nature were healthy before the examination began. “If Adam had always remained in Paradise, there would have been no anatomy and no metaphysics :” as it is not so, we require both. Sin has entered the world, and death by sin ; therefore it is that both soul

and body require a careful and minute watchfulness that cannot, in the present state of things, originate either disease or sin. They have both existed before.

No one ever became or can become selfish by a prayerful examination into the fact of being so or not. In matters of mere feeling it is indeed dangerous to scrutinize too narrowly the degree and the nature of our emotions. We have no standard by which to try them. If a medical man cannot be trusted to ascertain correctly the state of his own pulse, how much more difficult is it for the amateur to sit in judgment on the strength and number of the pulsations of his own heart and mind?

The case is quite different when feelings manifest themselves in overt acts: then they become of a nature requiring and susceptible of minute analysis. This is the self-scrutiny I recommend to you.

May you be led to seek earnestly for help from above to overcome the hydra of selfishness! and may you be encouraged, by that freely offered help, to exert your own energies to the utmost!

Let me urge on your especial attention the following verses from the Bible, on the subjects we have been considering. If you selected each one

of these for a week's *practice*, making it at once a question, a warning, and a direction, it would be a tangible, so to speak, use of the Holy Scriptures, that has been found profitable to many:—

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. Even Christ pleased not himself.”—Romans, xv. 1, 2, 3.

“The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.”—Matt. xx. 28.

“He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.”—2 Cor. v. 15.

“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”—Philippians, ii. 4.

“Let all your things be done with charity.”—1 Cor. xvi. 14.

“By love serve one another.”—Galatians, v. 13.

“But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you, for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.”—1 Thessalonians, iv. 9.

“My little children, let us not love in word,

neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." —
1 John, iii. 18.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore
love is the fulfilling of the law." — Romans, xiii.
9, 10.

"All things whatsoever ye would that men
should do to you, do ye even so to them." — Matt.
vii. 12.

LETTER VI.

SELF-CONTROL.

You will probably think it strange that I should consider it necessary to address you, of all others, upon the subject of self-control, — you who are by nature so placid and gentle, so dignified and refined, that you have never been known to display any of the outbreaks of temper sometimes disgracing the conduct of your companions.

You compare yourself with others, and probably admire your superiority. You have, besides, so often listened to the assurances of your friends that your temper is one that cannot be disturbed, that you may think self-control the very last point to which your attention needed to be directed. Self-control, however, has relation to many things besides mere temper. In your case I really believe that to be of singular sweetness, though even in your case the temper itself may still require self-control. You will esteem it perhaps a paradox

when I tell you that the very causes which preserve your temper in an external state of equability, your refinement of mind, your self-respect, your delicate reserve, your abhorrence of everything unfeminine and ungraceful, may produce exactly the contrary effect on your feelings, and provoke internally a great deal of contempt and dislike for those whose conduct opposes your exalted ideas of excellence.

On your own account you would not allow any unkind word to express the sentiments I have described, but you cannot or do not conceal them in the expression of your features, in the tones of your voice. You further allow them free indulgence in the depths of your heart; in its secret recesses you make no allowances for the inferiority of people so differently constituted, educated, and disciplined from yourself,—people whom, instead of despising and avoiding, you ought certainly to pity, and, if possible, to sympathise with.

In this respect, therefore, the control I recommend to you, has reference even to your much-vaunted temper; for though any outward display of ill-breeding and petulance might be much more opposed to your respect for yourself, any inward indulgence of the same feelings must be equally displeasing in the sight of God, and nearly as pre-

judicial to the passing on of your spirit towards being "perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."*

Besides, though there may be no outbreak of ill-temper at the time your annoyance is excited, nor any external marks of disapprobation even in your expressive countenance, you will certainly be unable to preserve kindness and respect of manner towards those whose errors and failings are not met by internal self-control. You will be contemptuously heedless of the assertions of those whose prevarication you have even once experienced; those who have once taunted you with obligation will never again be allowed to confer a favour upon you; you will avoid all future intercourse with those whose unkind or perhaps rude words have wounded your refinement and self-respect. All this would contribute to the formation of a fine character in romance; for everything that I have spoken of implies your own truth and honesty, your generous nature, your delicate and sensitive habits of mind, your dread of inflicting pain. For all these admirable qualities I give you full credit; and, as I said before, they would make an heroic character in a romance. In real life, however,

* Matt. v. 48.

they, every one of them, require strict self-control to form either a Christian character or one that will confer peace and happiness. You may be all that I have described, and I believe you to be so, while at the same time your severe judgments and unreasonable expectations may be productive of unceasing discomfort to yourself and all around you. Your friends plainly see that you expect too much from them, that you are annoyed when their duller perceptions can discover no grounds for your annoyance, that you decline their offers of service when they are not made in exactly the refined manner your imagination requires. Your annoyance may seldom or never express itself in words, it is nevertheless perceptible in the restraint of your manner, in your carelessness of sympathy on any point with those who generally differ from you, in the very tone of your voice, in the whole character of your conversation. Gradually the gulf becomes wider and wider that separates you from those among whom it has pleased God that your lot should be cast.

You cannot yet be at all sensible of the dangers I am now pointing out to you. You cannot yet understand the consequences of your present want of self-control in this particular point. The light

of the future alone can waken them out of present darkness into distinct and fatal prominence.

Habit has not yet formed into an isolating chain that refinement of mind and loftiness of character which your want of self-control may convert into misfortunes instead of blessings. Whenever, even now, a sense of total want of sympathy forces itself upon you, you console yourself with such thoughts as these : " Sheep herd together, eagles fly alone,"* &c. Small consolation this, even for the pain your loneliness inflicts on yourself, still less for the breach of duties it involves !

There must, besides, be much danger in a habit of mind that leads you to attribute to your own superiority those very unpleasantnesses which would have no existence if that superiority were more complete. For, in truth, if your spiritual nature asserted its due authority over the animal, you would habitually exercise the power freely offered you, of supreme control over the hidden movements of your heart as well as over the outward expression of the lips.

I would strongly urge you to consider every evidence of your isolation—of your want of sympathy with others—as marks of moral inferiority; then,

* Sir Philip Sidney.

from your conscientiousness of mind, you would seek anxiously to discover the causes of such isolation, and you would endeavour to remove them.

Nothing is more difficult than the perpetual self-control necessary for this purpose. Constant watchfulness is required to subdue every feeling of superiority in the contemplation of your own character, and constant watchfulness to look upon the words and actions of others through, as it were, a rose-coloured medium. The mind of man has been aptly compared to cut glass, which reflects the very same light in various colours as well as different shapes, according to the forms of the glass. Display then the mental superiority of which you are justly conscious, by moulding your mind into such forms as will represent the words and actions of others in the most favourable point of view. The same illustration will serve to suggest the best manner of making allowances for those whose minds are unmanageable, because uneducated and undisciplined. They cannot *see* things in the same point of view that you do; how unreasonable then to expect that they should form the same estimate of them!

Let us now enter into the more minute details of this subject, and consider the many opportunities

for self-control which may arise in the course of even this one day. I will begin with moral evil.

You may hear falsehoods asserted, you may hear your friend traduced, you may hear unfair and exaggerated statements of the conduct of others, given to the very people with whom they are most anxious to stand well. These are trials you may be often exposed to, even in domestic life ; and their judicious management, the comparative advantages to one's friends or one's self of silence or defence, will require your calmest judgment and your soundest discretion ; qualities which of course cannot be brought into action without complete self-control. I can hardly expect, or, indeed, wish that you should bear the falsehoods I have spoken of without some risings of indignation ; these, however, must be subdued for your friends' sake as well as your own. You would think it right to conquer feelings of anger and revenge if you were yourself unjustly accused, and though the other excitement may bear the appearance of more generosity, you must on reflection admit that it is equally your duty to subdue such feelings when they are aroused by the injuries inflicted on a friend. The happy safeguard, the *instinctive* test, by which the well-regulated and comparatively innocent mind may

safely try the right or the wrong of every indignant feeling is this: so far as the feeling is painful, so far is it tainted with sin. To "be angry and sin not,"* there must be no pain in the anger: pain and sin cannot be separated: there may indeed be sorrow, but this is to be carefully distinguished from pain. The above is a test which, after close examination and experience, you will find to be safe and true. Whenever they are thus safe and true, our instinctive feelings ought to be gratefully made use of; thus even the animal nature may be made to come to the assistance of the spiritual, against which it is too often arrayed in successful opposition.

I have spoken of the exceeding difficulty of exercising self-control under such trying circumstances as those above described, and this difficulty will, I candidly confess, be likely to increase in proportion to your own honesty and generosity. Be comforted, however, by this consideration, that, conflict being the only means of forming the character into excellence, and your natural amiability averting from you many of the usual opportunities for exercising self-control, you would be in want of the former essential ingredient in spiritual discipline, did not your very virtues procure it for you.

* Ephesians, iv. 26.

While, however, I allow you full credit for these virtues, I must insist on a careful distinction between a mere virtue and a Christian grace. Every virtue becomes a vice the moment it overpasses its prescribed boundaries, the moment it is left free to follow the bent of animal nature instead of being, even though a virtue, kept under the strict control of religious principle.

I must now suggest to you some means by which I have known self-control successfully exhibited and perpetuated, with especial reference to that annoyance which we have last considered. Instead of dwelling on the deviations from truth of which I have spoken, even when they are to the injury of a friend, try to banish the subject from your mind and memory; or, if you are able to think of it in the very way you please, try to consider how much the original formation of the speaker's mind, careless habits, and want of any disciplining education, may each and all contribute to lessen her guilt. No one knows better than yourself that the original nature of the mind as well as its implanted habits, modifies every fact presented to its notice. Still further, the point of view from which the fact or the character has been seen may have been entirely different from yours. These other persons may

absolutely have *seen* the thing spoken of in a position so completely unlike your mental vision of it, that they are as incapable of understanding your view as you may be of understanding theirs. If sincere in your wish for improvement, you had better prove the truth of the above assertion by the following process. Take into your consideration any given action, not of a decidedly honourable nature—one which, perhaps, to most people would appear indifferent,—but to your lofty and refined notions deserving of some degree of reprehension. You have a sufficiently metaphysical head to be able to abstract yourself entirely from your own view of the case, and you can then contemplate it with a total freedom from prejudice. Such a contemplation can only be attempted when no feeling is concerned,—for feeling gives life to every peculiarity of moral sentiment, as the heat draws out characters before unknown and unnoticed.

I would have you then examine carefully into all the considerations capable of qualifying or altering even your own view of the case. Dwell long and carefully upon this part of the process. It is astonishing (incredible indeed until it is tried) how much our opinions of the very same action may alter if we determinately confine ourselves to the

favourable aspect in which it may be viewed, keeping the contrary side entirely out of sight.

As soon as this has been carried to the utmost, you must further (that my experiment may be fairly tried) endeavour to throw yourself, in imagination, not only into the position, but also into the natural and acquired mental and moral perceptions of the person whose action you are taking into your consideration. For this purpose you must often imagine—natural dimness of perception, absence of acute sensibility, indifference to wounding the feelings of others from mere carelessness and want of reflective powers, little natural conscientiousness, an entire absence of the taste or the power of metaphysical examination into the effect produced by our actions. All these natural deficiencies, you must further consider, may in this case be increased by a totally neglected education,—first, by the want of parental discipline, and afterwards of that more important self-education which few people have sufficient strength of character to subject themselves to. Lastly, I would have you especially consider the moral atmosphere they have habitually breathed: according to the nature of this the mental health varies as certainly as the physical strength varies in a bracing or relaxing air. A

strong bodily constitution may resist longer, and finally be less affected by a deleterious atmosphere than a weak or diseased frame; and so it is with the mental constitution. Minds insensibly imbibe the tone of the atmosphere in which they most frequently dwell; and though natural loftiness of character, and natural conscientiousness, may for a very long period resist such influence, this cannot be expected from inferior natures.

You are then to consider whether the habits of mind and conversation among those who are the constant associates of the persons you blame have been such as to cherish or to deaden keen and refined perceptions of moral excellence and nobility of mind; still further, whether their own literary tastes have created around them an even more penetrating atmosphere; whether from the elevated inspirations of appreciated poetry, from the truthful page of history, or from the stirring excitements of romantic fiction, their heart and their imagination have received those lofty lessons for which you judge them responsible, without knowing whether they have ever received them.

There is still another consideration. While the actions of those who are not habitually under the

control of high principle depend chiefly on the physical constitution, as they are too often a mere yielding to the immediate impulse of the senses, their judgment of men and things, on the contrary, when uninfluenced by *personal* feeling, depend probably more on a keen perception of the beautiful, the natural instinct of a superior organisation. It is only by degrees that morality and religion will supply the place of these lofty *natural* instincts, by giving habits of mind which may in time become so burnt in, as it were, that they assume the form of natural instincts, while they are at once much safer guides and much stronger checks.

It is surprising that a mere sense of the beautiful will often confer the clearest perceptions of the real nature of moral excellence. You may hear the devoted worldling, or the selfish sensualist, giving the highest and most inspiring lessons of self-renunciation, self-sacrifice, and devotedness to God. Their lessons, truthful and impressive, because dictated by a keen and exquisite perception of the beautiful, which ever harmonises with the precepts and doctrines of Christianity, have kindled in many a heart a living flame, smothered in their own by the fatal homage of the lips and of the feelings only, while the actions of the life were disobedient. Often

has such a writer or speaker stood in stern and truthfully severe judgment on the weak "brother in Christ" when he has acted or spoken with an inconsistency forbidden in his censor by the mere instinct of the beautiful. Such censors, however, ought to remember that these weak brethren, though their instincts be less lofty, their sensibility less acute, live closer to their principles than they themselves do to their feelings; for the moment the natural impulse, in cases where that is the only guide, is enlisted on the side of passion, the perception of the beautiful is readily sacrificed to the gratification of the senses. When the animal nature comes into collision with the spiritual, the highest dictates of the latter will be unheeded, unless the supremacy of the spiritual nature be habitually maintained in practice as well as in theory. In short, that keen perception of the true and the beautiful, which is an essential ingredient in the formation of a noble character, becomes, in the case of the self-indulgent worldling, only an increase of his responsibility, and a deepening dye to his guilt. At present, however, I suppose you to be sitting in judgment on those who are entirely destitute of the aids and the responsibilities of a refined instinct: how different, then, from your own must be their estimate of

virtue and duty! Add this, therefore, to all the other allowances you have to make for them, and I will answer for it that any action viewed through this qualifying medium will entirely change its aspect, and your blame will most frequently turn to pity, though of course you can feel neither sympathy nor respect.

On the other hand, the practice of dwelling only on the aggravating circumstances of a case will magnify into crime a trifling and otherwise easily forgotten error. This is a fact in the mind's history few people seem to be aware of, and only few may be capable of understanding. Its truth, however, may be easily proved by watching the effect of words in irritating one person against another, and increasing, by repeated insinuations, the apparent malignity of some really trifling action. No one, probably, has led so blessed a life as not to have been sometimes pained by observing one person trying to exasperate another, who is, perhaps, rather peacefully inclined, by pointing out all the aggravating circumstances of some probably imaginary offence, until the listener is wrought up to a state of angry excitement, and induced to look on that as an exaggerated injury which probably would otherwise have passed without notice. What

is in this case the effect of another's sin is a state often produced in their own mind by those who would be incapable of the more tangible, and therefore more evidently sinful, act of exciting the anger of one friend or relative against another.

The sin I speak of is peculiarly likely to be that of a thoughtful, reflective, fastidious person like yourself. It is to you, therefore, of the utmost importance to acquire, and to acquire at once, complete control over your thoughts — first, carefully ascertaining those that you ought to avoid, and then guarding as carefully against such as if they wore the open semblance of positive sin. This is really the only means by which a truthful and candid nature like your own can ever maintain the deportment of Christian love and charity towards those amongst whom your lot is cast. You must resolutely shut your eyes against all that is unlovely in their character. If you suffer your thoughts to dwell for a moment on such subjects, you will find additional difficulty afterwards in forcing them away from that which is their natural tendency, besides having probably created a feeling against which it will be vain to struggle. It is one of the strongest reasons for the necessity of watchful self-control, that no mind, however power-

ful, can exercise a direct authority over the feelings of the heart; they are susceptible of indirect influence alone. This much increases the necessity of watchfulness as to the indirect tendencies of thoughts and words, and our accountability with respect to them. Our anxiety and vigilance ought to be altogether greater than if we could exercise over our feelings that direct and instantaneous control a strong mind can always assert in the case of words and actions.

Unless the indirect influence of which I have spoken were practicable, the warnings and commands of Scripture would be a mockery of our weakness—a cruel satire on the helplessness of a victim whose efforts to fulfil duty must, however strenuous, prove unavailing. The child is commanded to honour his parent, the wife to reverence her husband; and you are to observe attentively that there is no exception made for the cases of those whose parents or husbands are undeserving of love and reverence. There must, then, be a power granted, to such as ask and *strive* to acquire it, of closing the mental eyes resolutely against those features in the character of the persons to whom we are bound by the ties of duty, which would unfit us, if much dwelt upon, for obedience in such

important particulars as the love and reverence we are commanded to feel towards them.

Even where there is such high principle and such uncommon strength of character as to induce perseverance in the mere external forms of obedience, how vain are all such while the heart has turned aside from the appointed path of duty, and broken those commands of God which, we should always remember, have reference to feeling as well as to action:—“Honour thy father and thy mother;”* “Let the wife see that she reverence her husband.”†

In the habitual exercise of the self-control I now urge upon you, you will experience an ample fulfilment of that promise—“The work of righteousness shall be peace.”‡ Instead of becoming daily further and further severed from those who are indeed your inferiors, but towards whom God has imposed duties upon you, you will daily find that in proportion to the difficulty of the task will be the sweetness and the peace rewarding its fulfilment. No affection resulting from the most perfect sympathy of mind and heart will ever confer so deep a pleasure, or so holy a peace, as the blind, unques-

* Exodus, xx. 12.

† Ephesians, v. 33.

‡ Isaiah, xxxii. 17.

tioning, "unsifting" * tenderness cherished into existence by a strong principle of duty.

Glorious in every way will be the final result to those who are capable (alas! few are so) of such a course of conduct. Far different in its effects from the blind tenderness of infatuated passion is the noble blindness of Christian self-control. While the one warms into existence, or at least into open manifestation, all the selfishness and wilfulness of the fondled plaything, the other creates a thousand virtues that were not known before. Flowers spring up from the hardest rocks; the coldest, sternest natures are gradually softened into gentleness; the faults of temper or of character that never meet with worrying opposition, or exercise unforgiving

* *Maria.* How can we love? —

Giovanna (interrupting). Mainly, by hearing none
 Decry the object, then by cherishing
 The good we see in it, and overlooking
 What is less pleasant in the paths of life.
 All have some virtue if we leave it them
 In peace and quiet, all may lose some part
 By sifting too minutely good and bad.
 The tenderer and the timider of creatures
 Often desert the brood that has been handled,
 Or turned about, or indiscreetly looked at.
 The slightest touches, touching constantly,
 Irritate and inflame.

LANDOR'S *Giovanna and Andrea.*

influence, gradually die away, fading even from the memory. The very atmosphere alone of such rare and lovely self-control seems to have a moral influence resembling the effects of climate upon the rude and rugged marble: every roughness is by degrees smoothed off, and even the colouring becomes subdued into calm harmony with all the features of its allotted position.

To the rarity of the virtue I have so long dwelt upon, we may trace the cause of almost all the domestic unhappiness witnessed whenever the veil is withdrawn from the secrets of *home*. Alas! how often is this blessed word but the symbol of freely-indulged ill-temper, unresisted selfishness, or, perhaps the most dangerous of all, exacting and unforgiving requirements! While the one party select their home as the only scene where they may safely and freely vent their caprices and ill-humours, the other require a stricter compliance with their wishes, a more exact conformity to their pursuits and opinions, than they meet with even from the temporary companions of their lighter hours. They forget that these companions have but a short time to exert themselves for their gratification; that they can then retire to their own home, probably to be as disagreeable there as the rela-

tions of whom the others complain. For then the mask is off, and they are at liberty — yes, at liberty, — freed from the inspection and the judgments of the world, and only exposed to those of God !

My friend, I am sure you have often shared in the pain and grief I feel, that in so few cases should home be the blessed, peaceful spot that poetry, whether in prose or rhyme, delights to picture. There is no real poetry that is not truth in its purest form — truth as it appears to the eyes from which the mists of sense are cleared away. Surely a Christian home ought to realise the representations of poetry, and become each day a nearer, though ever a faint, type of that eternal home for which our earthly one ought daily to prepare us.

Poetry and religion teach the same duties, instil the same feelings. Never believe that anything can be truly noble or great, that anything can be really poetical, which is not also religious. The poet is now partly a priest, as he was in the old heathen world ; and though, alas ! he may, like Balaam, utter inspirations his heart follows not, and his life denies, yet, like Balaam also, his words are full of lessons for us, though they may only make his own guilt the deeper.

I have been led to these concluding remarks on

poetry by my anxiety that you should turn your refined tastes and your acute perceptions of the beautiful to a universally moral purpose. There is no teaching more impressive than that which comes to us through our passions. In the moment of excited feeling, stronger impressions may be made than by the warnings of duty and principle. If these latter, however, be not motives co-existent, and also in strength and exercise, the impressions of feeling are temporary, and even dangerous. It is only to the faithful followers of duty that the excitements of romance and poetry are useful and improving. To such they have often given strength and energy to tread more cheerfully and hopefully along many a rugged path, to live more closely to their own *beau-idéal*, when a vivid vision of it has, by poetry, been awakened and refreshed in their hearts.

To others, on the contrary, the danger exceeds the profit. By the excitement of admiration they may be deceived into the belief that there must be in their own bosoms an answering spirit to the greatness, the self-sacrifice, the pure and lofty affections, they see represented in the mirror of poetry. They are deceived, because they forget that we have each within us two natures struggling for

the mastery. As long as we practically allow the habitual supremacy of the lower over the higher, there can be no real excellence in the character, however a mere sense of the beautiful may temporarily exalt the feelings, thus only increasing responsibility and consequent condemnation.

I am sure you have experimentally understood the subject on which I have been writing. I am sure you have often risen from the teaching of the poet with enthusiasm in your heart, ready to trample upon all those temptations and difficulties which had, perhaps an hour before, made the path of self-denial and self-control apparently impracticable.

Receive such intervals of excitement as heaven-sent aids, to help you more easily over, it may be, a wearying and dreary path. They are most probably sent in answer to prayer—in answer to the prayers of your own heart, or to those of some pious friend.

Our Father in Heaven works constantly by earthly means, and moulds the weakest, the often apparently useless, instrument to the furtherance of His purposes of mercy. One of these you know is your own sanctification. It is not His Holy Word only that gives you appointed messages and helps exactly suited to your need. The flower growing by the way-side, the picture or the poem, the works

of God's own hand, or the works of the genius He has breathed into his creature Man, may all alike bear you messages of love, of warning, of assistance.

Listen attentively, and you will hear — clearer still and clearer — every day and hour. It is not by chance you take up that book, or gaze upon that picture: you have found, because you are on the watch for it, in the first, a suggestion that exactly suits your present need; in the latter, an excitement and an inspiration making some difficult action you may be immediately called on to perform comparatively easy and comparatively welcome.

There is a deep and universal meaning in the vulgar * proverb, "Strike while the iron is hot." If it be left to cool without your purpose being effected, the iron becomes harder than ever, the chains of nature and of habit are more firmly riveted.

There are some other features of self-control to which I wish, though more cursorily, to direct your attention. They have all some remote bearing on the moral nature, and may exercise much influence over your prospects in life.

* Miss Edgeworth says that proverbs are vulgar because they are common sense.

Like many other persons of a refined and sensitive organisation, you suffer from the peculiarly English disease of shyness. At the very time, perhaps, when you desire most to please, to interest, to amuse, your over-anxiety defeats its own object. The self-possession of the indifferent, generally carries off the palm from the earnest and the anxious. This is ridiculous; this is degrading. What you will, you ought to have the power to perform; and this you will have, if you habitually exercise control over the physical feelings of your nature.

I am quite of the opinion of those who hold that shyness is a bodily as well as a mental disease, much influenced by the temporary state of health, as well as by the constitutional state of the circulation; but I only put forward this opinion respecting its origin as additional evidence that it too may be brought under the authority of self-control. For if the grace of God, giving efficacy and help to our own exertions, can enable us to resist the influence of indigestion and other kinds of ill-health upon the temper and the spirits, will not the same means be effectual to subdue a shyness which almost sinks us to the level of the brute creation by depriving us of the advantages of a rational will? For even this distinguishing feature of humanity is prostrated before the mysterious power of shyness.

You understand, doubtless, the wide distinction that exists between modesty and shyness. Modesty is always self-possessed, and therefore clear-sighted and cool-headed. Shyness, on the contrary, is too confused either to see or hear things as they really are; it as often assumes the appearance of forwardness, as any other disguise. Depriving its victims of the power of being themselves, it leaves them little freedom of choice as to the sort of imitations the freaks of their animal nature may lead them to attempt. You know, to your deep annoyance, that a paroxysm of shyness has often made you speak entirely at random, and express the very opposite sentiments to those you really feel; committing yourself irretrievably to, perhaps, falsehood and folly, because you could not exercise self-control. Try to bring vividly before your mental eye all that you have suffered in the recollection of past weaknesses of this kind;—that will give you energy and strength to struggle habitually, incessantly, against every symptom of so painful a disease. It is, at first, only the smaller symptoms that can be successively combated; after the strength acquired by perseverance in lesser efforts, you may hope to overcome your powerful enemy in its very stronghold.

Even in the quietest social life many opportuni-

ties will be offered you of combat and of victory. False shame, the fear of being laughed at now, or taunted afterwards, will often keep you silent when you ought to speak ; and you ought to speak very often for no other than the sufficient reason of accustoming yourself to disregard the hampering feeling of "What will people say?" "To what do I expose myself by making this observation?" Follow the impulses of your own noble and generous nature, speak the words it dictates, and then you may and ought to trample under foot the insinuations of shyness as to the judgments others may pass upon you.

You may observe that those censors who make a coward of you can always find something to say in blame of every action, some taunt with which to reflect upon every word. Do not, then, suffer yourself to be hampered by the dread of depreciating remarks being made upon your conversation or your conduct. Such fears are amongst the most common causes of shyness. You must not allow your mind to dwell upon them, except to consider that taunting and depreciating remarks may and will be made on every course of conduct you may pursue, on every word you or others may speak.

I have myself been cured of any shackling anxiety

as to "What will people say?" by a long experience of the fact, that the remarks of the gossip are totally irrespective of the conduct or the conversation she gossips over. The word or action blamed one moment, is highly extolled the next, when the necessity of depreciating contrast requires the change; and as for the *inconséquence* of the remarks so rapidly following each other, the gossip is "thankful she has not an argumentative head." She is, therefore, privileged one moment to contradict the inevitable consequences of the assertions made the moment before.

You cannot avoid such criticisms; brave them nobly. The more you disregard them, the more true will you be to yourself, the more free will you be from that shyness which, though partly the result of keen and acute perceptions and refined sensibilities, has besides a large share of over-anxious vanity and deeply-rooted pride.

Do not believe those who tell you that shyness will decrease of itself, as you advance in age, and mix more in the world. There is, indeed, a species of shyness often thus removed; but it is not that arising from a morbid refinement. This latter species, unguarded by habitual self-control, will, on the contrary, rather increase than decrease, as

further experience shows you the numerous modes of failure, the thousand tender points in which you may be assailed by the world without.

Be assured that your only hope of safety is in an early and persevering struggle, accompanied by faith in final victory ;—without that, who can have strength for conflict? Do not treat your boasted intellect so depreciatingly as to doubt its power of giving you successful aid in your triumph over difficulties. What has been done, may be done again ;—why not by you ?

Nothing is more interesting than to see a strong mind evidently struggling against, and obtaining a victory over, the shyness of its animal nature. The appreciative observer pays it, at the same time, the involuntary homage always attending success, and the still deeper respect due to those who, having been thus “Cæsar unto themselves,”* are also sure, in time, to conquer all external things.

In conclusion, I must remind you that your life has, as yet, flowed on in a smooth and untroubled course, so that you cannot from experience be aware of the much greater future necessity there may be for those habits of self-control I now urge

* Emerson.

upon you. But though no overwhelming shocks, no stunning surprises, have, as yet, disturbed the "even tenor of your way," it cannot be always thus. Alas ! the time must come, as it comes to all, when sorrows will pour in upon you like a flood, when you will be called upon for rapid decisions, for far-sighted and comprehensive arrangements, for various exercises of the coolest, calmest judgment, at the very moment that present anguish and anxiety for the future are raising whirlwinds of clouds around your mental vision. If you are not now acquiring the power of self-control, by conducting minor affairs judiciously under circumstances of trifling excitement or disturbance, how will you be able to act your part with skill and courage when the hours of real trial overtake you? A character like yours, as it possesses the power, so likewise it is responsible for the duty, of moving on steadily through moral clouds and storms, seeing clearly, resisting firmly, and uninfluenced by any motives but those suggested by your higher nature.

The passing shadow, or the gleam of sunshine, the half-expressed sneer, or the tempests of angry passion, the words of love and flattery, or the cruel insinuations of envy and jealousy, may pale your cheek, or call into it a deeper flush ; may kindle

your eye with indignation, or melt its rays in sorrow ; but they must not, for all that, turn you aside one step from the path before marked out by your calm and deliberate judgment : insensibility to such annoyances as those I have described would show an unfeminine hardness of character ; being influenced by them would strengthen into habit any natural unfitness for the high duties you may probably be called on to fulfil. When in future years you may be appealed to, by those who depend on you alone, for guidance, for counsel, for support in warding off, or bearing bravely, dangers, difficulties, and sorrows, you will have cause for bitter repentance if you are unable to answer such appeals ; nor can you answer them successfully unless, in the present hours of comparative calm, you are, in daily trifles, habituating yourself to the exercise of self-control. Every day thus wasted now, may in the future cause you years of unavailing regret.

LETTER VII.

ECONOMY.

PERHAPS there is no duty that needs to be more watchfully and continually impressed on the young and generous heart than the difficult one of economy. There is no virtue that in such natures requires more vigilant self-control and self-denial, besides the exercise of a free judgment, uninfluenced by the excitement of feeling.

To you this virtue will be doubly difficult, because you have so long watched its unpleasant manifestations in a distorted form. You are exposed to danger from that which has perverted many notions of right and wrong; you have so long heard things called by false names, that you are inclined to turn away in contempt from a noble reality. You have been accustomed to hear the name of economy given to penuriousness and meanness; so that now, the wounded feelings and the refined tastes of your nature having been excited

to disgust by this system of falsehood, you will find it difficult to realise in economy a virtue uniting to all the noble instincts of generosity the additional features of strong-minded self-control.

It is therefore necessary, before I endeavour to impress upon your mind the duty and advantages of economy, that I should previously help you to a clear understanding of the real meaning of the word itself.

The difficulty of forming a true and distinct conception of the quality thus denominated is much increased by its being equally misrepresented by two entirely opposite parties. The avaricious, those to whom the expenditure of a shilling costs a real pang of regret, claim for their mean vice the honour of a virtue that can have no existence, unless the same pain and the same self-control were exercised in withholding, as with them would be exercised in giving. On the other hand, the extravagant, sometimes wilfully, sometimes unconsciously, fall into the same error of applying to the noble self-denial of economy the degrading misnomers of avarice, penuriousness, &c.

It is, indeed, possible that the avaricious may become economical,—after first becoming generous, which is an absolutely necessary preliminary. That

which is impossible with man, is possible with God; and who may dare to limit His free grace? This, however, is one of the wonders I have never yet witnessed. The love of money is so truly the "root of all evil,"* that there is no room in the heart where it dwells for any other growth, for any thing lovely or excellent. The taint is universal; and while much that is amiable and interesting may originally exist in characters containing the seeds of every other vice (however in time overshadowed and poisoned by such neighbourhood), it would seem that "the love of money" always reigns in sovereign desolation, admitting no warm or generous feeling into the heart it governs. Such, however, you will at once deny to be the case of those from whose penuriousness your early years have suffered; you know that their character is not thus bare of virtues. But do not for this contradict my assertion. Theirs was not always innate love of money for its own sake, though at length they may have unfortunately learned to love it thus—a feeling which is the true test of avarice. It has, on the contrary, been owing to the faults of others, to their having long experienced the deprivations attendant on a want of money, that they have acquired the habit

* 1 Timothy, vi. 10.

of thinking the consciousness of its possession quite as enjoyable as the powers and the pleasures its expenditure bestows. They know too well the pain of want of money, but have never learnt that "the real pleasure of its possession consists in its employment."* It is only from habit, only from perverted experience, they are avaricious; therefore I at once exonerate them from the charges I have brought against those whose very nature it is to love money for its own sake. At the same time, the strong expressions I have made use of respecting these latter, may, I hope, serve to obviate the suspicion of my having any indulgence for so despicable a vice, and may induce you to expect an unprejudiced statement of the merits and the duty of economy.

It is carefully to be remembered that the excess of every natural virtue becomes a vice; that these apparently opposing qualities are divided from each other by almost insensible boundaries. The habitual exercise of strong self-control can alone preserve even our virtues from degenerating into sin, and a clear-sightedness as to the very first step of declension must be sought for by self-denial on our own part, and by earnest prayer for the assisting

* The saying of the "Great Captain," Gonsalvo di Cordova.

graces of the Holy Spirit, to search the depths of our heart, and open our eyes to see.

Thus it is that the free and generous impulses of a warm and benevolent nature, though in themselves amongst the loveliest manifestations of the merely natural character, will and necessarily must degenerate into extravagance and self-indulgence, unless they are kept vigilantly and constantly under the control of prudence and justice. And this, if you consider the subject impartially, is fully as much the case when these generous impulses are not exercised alone in procuring indulgences for one's friend's or one's self, but even when they excite you to the relief of real suffering and pitiable distress, at a time when you cannot afford to administer such relief.

This last is, indeed, one of the severest trials involved in the duty of economy; but that it is a part of that duty to resist even such temptations, will be easily ascertained if you consider the subject coolly—that is, if you consider it when your feelings are not excited by the sight of a distressed object, whose situation may be readily altered by some of that money which you think, and think justly, is only useful, only enjoyable, in the moment of expenditure.

The trial is, I confess, severe: it is best that the decision with respect to it should be made when your feelings are excited on the opposite side, when some useful act of charity to the poor has incapacitated you from meeting the demands of justice.

I am sure your memory, ay, and your present experience too, can furnish you with some cases of this kind. It may be that the act of generosity was a judicious and useful one, that the suffering would have been great if you had not performed it; but, on the other hand, it has disabled you from paying some bills that you knew at the very time were lawfully due as the reward of honest labour, which had trusted to your honour for this reward being punctually paid. You have a keen sense of justice, as well as a warm glow of generosity; one will serve to temper the other. Let the memory of every past occasion of this kind be deeply impressed, not only on your mind but on your heart, by frequent reflection on the painful thoughts that then forced themselves upon you,—the distress of those on whose daily labour the daily maintenance of their family depends; the collateral distress of the artisans employed by them, whom they cannot pay because you cannot pay; the degradation to your own character, from the experience of your creditors that

you have expended that which was in fact not your own ; the diminished, perhaps for ever injured, confidence which they and all who become acquainted with the circumstances will place in you ; and, finally, the probability that you have deprived some honest, industrious, self-denying tradesman of his hard-earned dues, to bestow the misnamed generosity upon some object of pity, who, however real his distress may be now, has probably deserved it by a deficiency in all the good qualities that maintain in respectability your defrauded creditor. The very character, too, of this creditor may suffer by your inability to pay him ; for he, miscalculating on your honesty and truthfulness, may, on his side, have engaged to make payments, become impossible for him when you fail in your duty : in this case you can scarcely calculate how far the injury to him may extend ;—this is a far more permanent and serious evil than his incapacity to answer the daily calls upon him I have before spoken of. In short, if you will try to bring vividly before you all the painful feelings that passed through your mind, and all the contingencies contemplated by you, on any one of these occasions, you will scarcely differ from me when I assert my belief that the name of dishonesty would be a far

more correct word than that of generosity to apply to such actions as the above: you are, in fact, giving away the money of another person, depriving him of his property, his time, or his goods, under false pretences; and, in addition to this, appropriating to yourself the pleasure of giving, which surely ought to belong to the right owner of the thing given.

I have here considered one of the most trying cases, when the withholding of your liberality becomes a really difficult duty, so difficult that the opportunity should be as much as possible avoided: it is for this purpose more especially that the science of economy should be diligently studied and practised, that so "you may have to give to him that needeth," without depriving others of their lawful dues. Probably, in most of the cases I have reminded you of, some previous acts of self-denial would have saved you from a temptation to the sin of giving away the property of another. I would not willingly suppose that an act of self-denial at the very time you witnessed the case of distress might have provided you with the means of satisfying both generosity and honesty; for, as I said before, I know you to have a keen sense of justice, and, though you have never yet been vigilant enough in

the practice of economy, I cannot believe that, with an alternative before you, you would indulge in any personal expenditure, even bearing the appearance of almost necessity, but involving a failure in the payment of your debts. I speak, then, only of previous acts of self-denial ; and I wish you to be persuaded, that unless these are practised habitually and incessantly you can never be truly generous. A readiness to give that which costs you nothing, that which is so truly a superfluity that it involves no sacrifice, is a mere animal instinct, as selfish perhaps, though more refinedly so, than any other species of self-indulgence. Generosity is a nobler quality ; one that can have no real existence without economy and self-denial.

I have spoken several times of the study of economy, and of the science of economy ; and I used these words advisedly. However natural and comparatively easy it may be to some persons to form an accurate judgment of the general average of their ordinary expenses, and of all the contingencies perpetually arising, I do not believe that you, by nature, possess this power : you only need, however, to force your intellectual faculties into this direction to find that here, as elsewhere, they may be made available for every imaginable purpose.

You have sometimes probably envied those amongst your acquaintance, much less highly gifted perhaps than yourself, who have so little difficulty in practising economy, that, without any effort at all, they have always money in hand for any unexpected exigency, as well as to answer all the usual demands upon their purse. It is an observation every one makes, that amongst the same number of girls, some will be found to dress better, give away more, and be better provided for sudden emergencies, than their companions. Nor are these ordinarily the more clever girls of one's acquaintance: I have known some who were decidedly below par as to intellect, and yet possessed in a high degree the practical knowledge of economy. Instead of vainly lamenting your natural inferiority on a point so important, you should seek diligently to remove it.

An acquired knowledge of the art of economy is far better than any natural skill therein: the acquisition will involve the exercise of many intellectual faculties, such as generalisation, foresight, calculation, at the same time that the moral faculties are strengthened by the constant exercise of self-control. For, granted that the naturally economical are neither shabbily penurious nor deficient in the duty of almsgiving, it is still evident that to them

it cannot be the same effort to deny themselves a tempting act of liberality, or the gratification of elegant and commendable tastes, as to those who are destitute of equally instinctive feelings as to the inadequacy of their funds to meet demands of this nature. It is invariably true that economy must be difficult, and therefore admirable, in proportion to the warm-heartedness and the refined tastes of those who practise it. The less amiable and less refined can form no conception of the thousand temptations besetting the highly-gifted and the generous to expenditure beyond their means. If, however, those above spoken of are exposed to stronger temptations than others, they also carry within themselves the means, if properly employed, of more skilful and effectual resistance. There is, as I said before, no right purpose, however contrary to the natural constitution of the mind, for which intellectual powers may not be made available ; and if strong feelings render self-denial more difficult, especially in points of charity or generosity, they, on the other hand, serve to impress more deeply and vividly the painful self-reproach consequent upon any act of imprudence and extravagance.

The first effort made by your intellectual powers towards acquiring a practical knowledge of the

science of economy should be the important one of generalising all your expenses, and then performing the same process upon the funds there is a fair probability of your having at your disposal. The former is difficult, as the expenditure of even a single person, independent of any establishment, involves so many unforeseen contingencies, that unless, by combining the past and the future, you generalise a probable average, and then bring this average *within* your income, you can never experience any of the peace of mind and readiness to meet the calls of charity which economy alone bestows. No one of strict justice can combine tranquillity with the indulgence of generosity unless she lives *within* her income. Whether the expenditure be on a large or a small scale, it signifies little; she alone is truly rich who has brought her wants sufficiently within the bounds of her income to have always something with which to provide for unexpected occurrences.

In laying down rules for your expenditure, you will, of course, impose upon yourself a regular dedication of a certain portion of your income to charitable purposes. This ought to be considered as entirely set apart, as no longer your own: your opportunities must determine the exact proportion;

but the tenth, at least, of the substance God has given you must be considered as appropriated to His service; nor can you hope for a blessing upon the remainder if you withhold what has been distinctly claimed. Besides the regular allowance for the wants of the poor, I can readily suppose that it will be a satisfaction to you to deny yourself, from time to time, some innocent gratification, when a greater gratification is within your reach, by laying out your money "to make the widow's heart to sing for joy; to bring upon yourself the blessing of him that was ready to perish."* Here, however, will much watchfulness be required: you must be sure that it is only some self-indulgence you sacrifice, and nothing of that which the claims of justice demand. For when, after systematic, as well as present, self-denial, you still find that you cannot afford to relieve the distress it pains your heart to witness, be careful to resist the temptation of giving away the money lawfully due to others. For the purpose of saving suffering in one direction you may cause it in another: besides, you set yourself as plainly in opposition to that which is the will of God concerning you as if your imprudent expenditure were caused by

* Job, xxix. 13.

some temptation less refined and unselfish than the relief of real distress. The gratification another woman would find in a splendid dress, you derive from more exalted sources ; but if you or she purchase your gratification by an act of injustice, by spending money that does not belong to you, you, as well as she, are making an idol of self, in choosing to have what the providence of God has denied you. "The silver and the gold is mine, saith the Lord;" and it cannot be without a special purpose, relating to the peculiar discipline requisite for such characters, that this silver and gold is so often withheld from those who would make the best and kindest use of it. Murmur not, then, when this hard trial comes upon you, when you see want and sorrow which you cannot, in justice to others, relieve ; when you see thousands, at the very moment you experience this generous suffering, expended on entirely selfish, perhaps sinful, gratifications, neither be tempted to murmur nor to act unjustly. "Is it not the Lord?"—has not He in His infinite love and infinite wisdom appointed this very trial for you? Bow your head and heart in submission, and dare not to seek an escape from it by one step out of the path of duty. It may be that close examination, a searching of the stores of memory,

will bring even this trial within the class of deserved chastisement; it may be that it is the consequence of some former act of self-indulgence and extravagance, which would have been forgotten, or not deeply enough repented of, unless your sin had in this way been brought to remembrance. Thus even this trial assumes the invariable character of all God's punishments: it is the inevitable consequence of sin—as inevitable as the relation of cause and effect. It results from no special interposition of Providence, but is the natural result of those decrees upon which the whole system of the world is founded; secondarily, however, overruled to work for good to the penitent sinner, by impressing more permanently on his mind the humbling remembrance of past sin, and leading to a more watchful future avoidance of the same.

It is indeed probable that, without many trials of this peculiarly painful kind, the duty of economy could never be effectually taught to the naturally generous and warm heart. The restraints of prudence would be unheeded, unless bitter experience, as it were, burned them in.

I have spoken of two necessary preparations for the practice of economy—the first, a clear general view of our probable expenses; the second, I am

now about to notice: it is the calculation of the funds probably available to meet these expenses. In your case there is a certain income, with sundry contingencies, very much varying, and altogether uncertain. Such probabilities, then, as the latter ought to be appropriated to such expenses as are occasional and not inevitable: you must never calculate on them for any necessary expenditure, except in the same average manner as you have calculated that expenditure; and you must estimate the average considerably within probabilities, or you will be often thrown into discomfort. It is much better that all indulgences of mere taste, of entirely personal gratification, should be dependent on this uncertain fund; and here again I would warn you to keep in view the more pressing wants that may arise in the future. The gratification you are now indulging in may be one perfectly innocent; but are you quite sure that you are not expending more money than *you* can prudently, or, to speak better, conscientiously afford, on a temporary gratification, involving no improvement or permanent benefit? You certainly are not sufficiently rich to indulge in any merely temporary gratification, except in extreme moderation. With relation to that part of your income which is vary-

ing and uncertain, I have observed that it is a very common temptation assailing the generous and thoughtless (thoughtless about money matters, often those who are least so about other things), that there is often some future prospect of an increase of income, intended to free them from present embarrassments, and enable them to pay for the enjoyment of all the wishes they are now gratifying. It is a future, however, that never arrives, for every increase of property brings new claims along with it; and it is found, too late, that, by exceeding present income, both the present and the future have been injured, for wants have been created by self-indulgence which the future income will find a difficulty in supplying, having in addition its own new ones to provide for.

It may indeed in a few, a very few, cases be necessary, in others expedient, to forestall the money we have every certainty of presently possessing; but, unless the expenditure relates to particulars coming under the term of "daily bread," it appears to me decided dishonesty to lay out an uncertain future income. Even if it should become ours, have we not acted in direct contradiction to the revealed will of God concerning us? The station of life God has placed us in depends very much on

the expenditure within our power; if we double that, do we not in fact choose wilfully for ourselves a different position from that He has appointed, and withdraw from under the guiding hand of His providence? Let us not hope that even temporal success will be allowed to result from such acts of disobedience.

What a high value does it stamp on the virtue of economy, when we thus consider it as one of the means towards enabling us to submit ourselves to the will of God!

I cannot close a letter to a woman on the subject of economy without referring to the subject of dress. Though your strongest temptations to extravagance may be those of a generous, warm heart, I have no doubt that you are also, though in an inferior degree, tempted by the desire to improve your personal appearance by the powerful aid of dress. It ought not to be otherwise; you should not be indifferent to a very important means of pleasing. Your natural beauty would be unavailing unless you devoted both time and care to its preservation and adornment. You should be solicitous to win the affection of those around you; and there are many who will be seriously influenced by any neglect of due atten-

* 2

*It was Addison's notion that
men was the best dressed
one*

tion to your personal appearance. Besides the insensible effect produced on the ignorant unreasoning spectator, those you most wish to please will look upon it, and with justice, as an index to your mind: a simple, graceful, well-ordered exterior will always give the impression that similar qualities exist within. Dressing well is to some a natural and easy accomplishment; to others who may have the very same qualities existing in their minds without the power (in a degree mechanical) of displaying the same outward manifestation of them, it will be much more difficult to attain the same object with the same expense. Your study, therefore, of the art of dress must be a double one,—must first enable you to bring the smallest details of your apparel into as close conformity as possible to the forms and tastes of your mind; and, secondly, enable you to reconcile this exercise of taste with the duties of economy. If fashion is to be consulted as well as taste, I fear you will find this impossible: if a gown or a bonnet is to be replaced by a new one, the moment a slight alteration takes place in the fashion of the shape or the colour, you will often be obliged to sacrifice taste as well as duty. Rather make up your mind to appear no richer than you are; if

you cannot afford to vary your dress according to the rapidly-varying fashions, have the moral courage to confess this in action. Nor will your appearance lose much by the sacrifice. If your dress is in accordance with true taste, the more valuable of your acquaintance will be able to appreciate that, while they would be unconscious of any strict and expensive conformity to the fashions of the month. Of course I do not speak now of any glaring discrepancy between your dress and the general costume of the time. There can be no display of a simple taste while any singularity in dress attracts notice; neither could there be much additional expense in a moderate attention to the prevailing forms and colours of the time,—for bonnets and gowns do not, alas! last for ever. What I mean to deprecate is, the laying aside any one of these, suitable in every other respect, lest it should reveal the secret of your having expended nothing upon dress during this season. Remember how many indulgences to your generous nature would be procured by the price of a fashionable gown or bonnet, and your feelings will provide a strong support to your duty. Another way in which you may successfully practise economy is by taking care of your clothes, having

x 3

+ I like that word

them repaired in proper time, and never unnecessarily exposing them to sun or rain. A ten-guinea gown may be sacrificed in half an hour, and the indolence of your disposition would lead you to prefer this sacrifice to the trouble of taking any preservatory precautions, or thinking about the matter at all. Is this right? Even if you could procure money to satisfy the demands of mere carelessness, are you acting as a faithful steward by thus expending it? I willingly grant to you that some women are so wealthy, placed in situations requiring so much *représentation*, that in them it would be degrading to take much thought about any thing but the beauty and fashion of their clothes: an anxiety on their part about the preservation of, to them, trifles would indicate meanness and parsimoniousness. Their office is to encourage trade by a lavish expenditure, conformable to the rank in life in which God has placed them. Happy are they if this wealth do not become a temptation too hard to be overcome! Happier those from whom such temptations, denounced in the Word of God more strongly than any other, are entirely averted!

This is your position; and as much as it is the duty of the very wealthy to expend proportionally

upon their dress, so is it yours to be scrupulously economical, and to bring down your aspiring thoughts from the regions of poetry and romance to the homely duties of mending and care-taking. There will be poetry and romance too in the generous and useful employment you may make of the money thus economised. Besides, if you do not yet see that they exist in the smallest and homeliest of every-day cares, it is only because your mind has not been sufficiently developed by experience to find poetry and romance too in every act of self-control and self-denial.

There is, I believe, a general idea that genius and intellectual pursuits are inconsistent with the minute observations and cares I have been recommending. Naturally, perhaps, they are. The memoirs of great men are filled with anecdotes of their incompetency for common-place duties, their want of observation, their indifference to details: you may observe, however, that such men were great in learning alone; they never exhibited the union of thought and action essential to constitute an heroic character.

We read that a Charlemagne and a Wallenstein could stoop in the midst of their vast designs and splendid successes to the cares of selling the eggs

of their poultry yard*, and of writing minute directions for its more skilful management.† A proper attention to the repair of the strings of your gowns or the ribbons of your shoes could scarcely be further, in comparison, beneath your notice.

The story of Sir Isaac Newton's cat and kitten has often made you smile; but it is no smile of admiration: such absence of mind is simply ridiculous. If, indeed, you should refer to its cause, you may by reflection ascertain that the concentration of thought causing such abstraction may, in his particular case, have been of use to mankind in general; but you must at the same time feel that he, even a Sir Isaac Newton, would have been a greater man had his genius been more universal, had he been able to act sensibly as well as to think greatly.

With women the same case is much stronger; their minds are seldom, if ever, employed on subjects so important and difficult as to make amends for such concentration of thought as necessarily, except in first-rate minds, produces abstraction and inattention to homely every-day duties.

Even in the case of a genius, one of most rare

* Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*.

† Colonel Mitchell's *Life of Wallenstein*.

occurrence, an attention to details, and thoughtfulness respecting them, though certainly more difficult, is proportionally more admirable than in ordinary women.

It was said of the wonderful Elizabeth Smith, that she equally excelled in every department of knowledge, from the translation of the most difficult passages of the Hebrew Bible down to the making of a pudding. You should establish it as a practical truth in your mind, that, with a strong will, the intellectual powers may be turned into every imaginable direction, and lead to excellence in one as surely as in another.

Even where the strong will is wanting, and there may not be the same mechanical facility that belongs to more vigorous organisations, every really useful and necessary duty is still within the reach of all intellectual women. Amongst these, you can scarcely doubt that the science of economy, and that important part of it which consists in taking care of your clothes, is possible to every woman who does not look upon it as beneath her notice. This I suppose you do not, as I know you to take a rational and conscientious view of the minor duties of life, and that you are anxious to fulfil those of

exactly "that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call you."*

I must not close this letter without adverting to an error those of your sanguine temperament would be the most likely to commit.

You will, perhaps—for it is a common progress—run from one extreme to another: from having expended too large a proportion of your income on personal decoration, you may next withdraw even necessary attention from it. "All must be given to the poor" will be the decision of your own impulses and of overstrained views of duty.

This, however, is, in an opposite direction, quitting the station of life in which God has placed you, as much as those do who indulge in an expenditure of double their income. Your dressing according to your station in life is as much in accordance with the will of God concerning you, as your living in a drawing-room instead of a kitchen, in a spacious mansion instead of a peasant's cottage. Besides, as you are situated, there is another consideration with respect to dress which must not be passed over in silence. The allowance you receive is expressly for the purpose of enabling you to dress properly, suitably, and

* The Church Catechism.

respectably ; and if you do not, in the first place, fulfil the purpose of the donor, you are surely guilty of a species of dishonesty. You have no right to indulge personal feeling, or gratify a mistaken sense of duty, by an expenditure of money for a different purpose from that for which it was given ; nor even, were your money exclusively your own, would you have a right to disregard the opinions of your friends by dressing in a different manner from them, or from what they consider suitable for you. If you thus err, they will neither allow you to exercise any influence over them, nor will they be at all prejudiced in favour of the, it may be, stricter religious principles you profess, when they find them lead to unnecessary singularity, and to disregard of the feelings and wishes of those around you. It is therefore your duty to dress like a lady, and not like a peasant girl,—not only because the former is the station in life God himself has chosen for you, but also because you have no right to lay out other people's money on your own devices ; lastly, because it is your positive duty, in this, as in all other points, to consult and consider the reasonable wishes and opinions of those with whom God has connected you by the ties of blood or friendship.

LETTER VIII.

THE CULTIVATION OF THE MIND.

IN writing to you upon the subject of mental cultivation, it would seem scarcely necessary to dwell for a moment on its advantages ; it would seem as if, in this case at least, I might come at once to the point, and state to you that which appears to me the best manner of attaining the object in view. But experience has shown me, that even into minds such as yours, doubts will often obtain admittance, sometimes from without, sometimes self-generated, as to the advantages of intellectual education for women. The time will come, even if you have never yet momentarily experienced it, when, saddened by the isolation of superiority, and witnessing the greater love or the greater prosperity acquired by those who have limited or neglected intellects, you may be painfully susceptible to the slighting remarks on clever women,

learned ladies, &c., often meeting your ear,—remarks which you will sometimes hear from uneducated women, who may seem to enjoy much more peace and happiness than yourself; sometimes from well-educated and sensible men, whose opinions you justly value. I fear, in short, that even you may at times be tempted to regret having directed your attention and devoted your early days to studies only attractive of envy or suspicion; that even you may, some day or other, attribute to your now favourite pursuits those disappointments and unpleasantnesses which doubtless await your path, as they do that of every traveller along life's weary way. This inconsistency may indeed be temporary; in a character such as yours it must be temporary, for you will feel, on reflection, that nothing gained by others, even were your loss of the same occasioned by intellectual cultivation, could make amends to you for its sacrifice. A mind really susceptible of culture must either select a suitable employment for its natural powers, or they will find some dangerous occupation for themselves, and eat away the very life they were intended to cherish and strengthen. I should wish you to be spared, however, the humiliation of even temporary regrets; at the very

least, they must occasion temporary loss of precious hours, and a decrease of that diligent labour for improvement only to be kept in an active state of energy by a deep and steady conviction of its nobleness and utility; further still (which would be worse than the temporary consequences to yourself), at such times of despondency you might be led to make admissions to the disadvantage of mental cultivation, to depreciate those very habits of study and self-improvement which it ought to be one of the great objects of your life to recommend to all. You might thus discourage some young beginner in the path of self-cultivation, who, had it not been for you, might have cheered a lonely way by the indulgence of healthy, natural tastes, besides exercising extensive beneficial influence over others. Your incautious words, doubly dangerous because they seem to be the result of experience, may be the cause of such a one's remaining in useless and wearisome, because uninterested, idleness. That you may guard the more successfully against incurring such responsibilities, you should without delay begin a long and serious consideration, founded on thought and experience united, as to the relative advantages of ignorance and knowledge. When, after the careful examination I

recommend, your mind has been fully made up on the point, you must lay your opinion aside on the shelf, as it were, and suffer it no longer to be considered as a matter of doubt, or a subject for discussion. You can, then, when temporarily assailed by weak-minded fears, appeal to the former dispassionate and unprejudiced decision of your unbiassed mind. To one like you, there is no safer appeal than that from a present excited, and consequently prejudiced, self to another dispassionate and consequently wiser self. Let us, then, consider in detail what foundation there may be for the remarks that are made to the depreciation of a cultivated intellect, and illustrate their truth or falsehood by the examples of those whose habits of life we have an opportunity of observing.

First, then, I would have you consider the position and the character of those amongst your unmarried friends who are unintellectual and uncultivated, and contrast them with those who by education have strengthened natural powers and developed natural capabilities: amongst these it is easy for you to observe whose society is most useful and most valued, whose opinion is most respected, whose example is most frequently held up to imitation, — I mean by those alone whose

esteem is worth possession. The giddy, the thoughtless, and the uneducated may, indeed, manifest a decided preference for the society of those whose pursuits and conversation are on a level with their own capacity; but you surely cannot regret that they should even manifestly (which, however, is not often ventured upon) shrink from your society. "Like to like" is a proverb older than the time of Dante; it was his answer to Can della Scala when reproached by him that the society of the frivolous was more sought after at court than that of the poet and philosopher. "Given the amuser, the amusee must also be given."* You surely ought not to regret the *cordon sanitaire* which protects you from the utter weariness, the loss of time, I might almost add of temper, uncongenial society would entail upon you. In the affairs of life you must generally make up your mind as to the good that deserves your preference, and resolutely sacrifice the inferior advantage that cannot be enjoyed along with the greater one. You must consequently give up all hope of general popularity if you desire that your society should be sought and valued, your opinion

* Hero Worship.

respected, your example followed, by those whom you really love and admire, by the wise and good, by those whose society you can yourself in your turn enjoy. You must not expect that at the same time you should be the favourite and chosen companion of the worthless, the frivolous, the uneducated; you ought not, indeed, to desire it. Crush in its very birth that mean ambition for popularity which might lead you on to sacrifice time and tastes—alas! sometimes even principles—to gain the favour and applause of those whose society ought to be a weariness to you. Nothing, besides, is more injurious to the mind than “a studied sympathy with mediocrity:” nay, without any “study,” any conscious effort to bring yourself down to their level, your mind must insensibly become weakened and tainted by a surrounding atmosphere of ignorance and stupidity, so that you would gradually become unfitted for the superior society you are formed to love and to appreciate. It is quite a different case when the dispensations of Providence and the exercise of social duties bring you into contact with uncongenial minds. Whatever is a duty, will be made safe to you: it can only be from your own

voluntary selection that any unsuitable association becomes injurious and dangerous.

But although it may be laid down as a general rule that the wise will prefer the society of the wise, the educated that of the educated, it sometimes happens that highly intellectual and cultivated persons select, absolutely by their own choice, the frivolous and the ignorant for their constant companions, though at the same time they may refer to others for counsel, and direction, and sympathy. But is this choice made on account of the frivolity and ignorance of the persons so selected? I am sure it is not. I am sure, if you inquire into every case of this kind, you will see for yourself that it is not. Such persons are thus preferred, sometimes on account of the fairness of their features, sometimes on account of the sweetness of their temper, sometimes for the lightheartedness creating an atmosphere of joyousness around them, and ensuring their never officiously obtruding the cares and anxieties of life upon their companions. Do not, then, attribute to want of intellect those attractions which only need to be combined with intellect to become altogether irresistible, though I must confess it may sometimes have an insensible

influence in destroying them. For instance, sweetness of temper is seldom increased by increased refinement of mind: on the contrary, the latter serves to quicken susceptibility, and render perception more acute; therefore, unless it is guarded by an accompanying increase of self-control, it naturally produces an alteration for the worse in the temper. This is one point. For the next, personal beauty may be injured by want of exercise, neglect of health, or of due attention to becoming apparel, — errors often resulting from an injudicious absorption in intellectual pursuits. Lastly, a thoughtful nature and habit of mind must of course induce quicker perception and more frequent contemplation of the sorrows and dangers of this mortal life than the volatile and thoughtless nature and habit of mind has any temptation to; and thus persons of the former class are often induced, sometimes usefully, sometimes unnecessarily, but perhaps always disagreeably, to intrude the melancholy subjects of their own meditations upon the persons they associate with, often making their society evidently unpleasant, and, if possible, carefully avoided. It is, however, unjust to attribute any of the inconveniences just enumerated to those intellectual pursuits which, if duly pro-

fited by, would prove effectual in improving, nay, even in bestowing, intelligence, prudence, tact, and self-control, and thus preserving from the very inconveniences to which I have referred. Be it your care to win praise and approbation for the habits of life you have adopted, by showing that such are the effects they produce in you. By your conduct you may prove that if your perceptions have been quickened, and your sensibilities rendered more acute, you have at the same time, and by the same means, acquired sufficient self-control to prevent others from suffering ill effects from that which would in such a case be only a fancied improvement in yourself. Further, let it be your care to bestow more attention than before on that external form which you are now learning to estimate as the living, breathing type of the spirit within. Finally, while your increased thoughtfulness and your developed powers of reason give you an insight into dangers and evils others never dream of, be careful to employ your knowledge only for the improvement or preservation of your friends' happiness. Guard within your own breast, however you may long for the relief of giving a free vent to your feelings, any sorrows or apprehensions that cannot be removed or obviated by their

revelation. Thus will you unite in yourself the combined advantages of the frivolous and intellectual; your society will be loved and sought after as much as that of the first can be, (only, however, by the wise and good—my assertion extends no further,) and you will at the same time be respected, consulted, and imitated, as the clever and educated can alone be.

I have hitherto spoken only of the unmarried amongst your acquaintance: let us now turn to the wives and mothers, and observe, with pity, the position of her who, though she may be well and fondly loved, is felt at the same time to be incapable of bestowing sympathy or counsel. It is, perhaps, the wife and mother who is best loved who will at the same time be made to feel most deeply her powerlessness to appreciate, to advise, or to guide: the very anxiety to hide from her that the society, the opinion, and the sympathy of others is more highly valued, because it alone can be appreciative, will only make her the more sensibly aware of her deficiency in the leading qualities that inspire respect and produce usefulness.

She must constantly feel her unfitness to take a part in the society that suits the taste of her more intellectual husband and children. She must ob-

serve that they are obliged to bring down their conversation to her level; that they are obliged to avoid, out of deference to, and affection for her, all the varied topics making social intercourse a useful as well as an agreeable exercise of the mental powers, — an often more improving arena of friendly discussion than perhaps any professed debating society. But no such employment of social intercourse can be attempted when one of the heads of the household is uneducated and unintellectual. The weather must form the leading, the only safe, topic of conversation; for the gossip of the neighbourhood, commented on in the freedom and security of family life, imparts to all its members a petty censoriousness of spirit that can never afterwards be entirely thrown off. Then the education of the children of such a mother as I have described must be carried on under the most serious disadvantages. Money in abundance may be at her disposal, but that is of little avail when she has no power of forming a judgment on the abilities of the persons so lavishly paid for forming the minds of the children committed to their charge: the precious hours of their youth will thus be very much wasted; and when self-education, in some few cases, comes in time to repair these early neglects, there must be

reproachful memories of that ignorance which placed so many needless difficulties in the path to knowledge and advancement.

But it is not alone those bound by the ties of wife and mother, whose intellectual cultivation may exercise a powerful influence in their social relations: each woman, in proportion to her mental and moral superiority, exercises influence over all those within her reach. Moral excellence alone effects much: the amiable, the loving, and the unselfish almost insensibly dissuade from evil, and persuade to good, those who have the good fortune to be within reach of such soothing influences. Their persuasions are, however, far more powerful when vivacity, sweetness, and affection are given weight to by strong natural powers of mind, united with high cultivation. Of all the "talents" committed to our stewardship, none will require to be so strictly accounted for as those of intellect. If we neglect the influence we might have acquired over our fellow-men, thus winning them over to think of, and practise, "all things lovely and of good report," it is surely a sin of deeper die than the mis-employment of mere money. The disregard of those intellectual helps we might have bestowed on others, thus extensively benefiting the cause of religion, one

of whose most useful handmaids is mental cultivation, will surely be amongst the most serious sins of omission that may swell our account at the last day. The intellectual Dives will not be punished only for the misuse of his riches, as in the case of a Byron or a Shelley; the neglecting to improve them by employing them for the good of others will equally disqualify him for hearing the final commendation of "Well done, good and faithful servant."* This, however, is not a point on which I need dwell at any length while writing to you: you are aware, fully, I believe, of the responsibilities entailed upon you by the natural powers you possess. It is from worldly motives of dissuasion, not from any ignorance with regard to an undoubted point of duty, that you may be at times induced to slacken your exertions in the task of self-improvement. You will not be easily persuaded that it is not your duty to educate yourself; the doubt more easily instilled into your mind will be respecting the possible injury to your happiness or worldly advancement by the increase of your knowledge and the improvement of your mind. Look, then, around you, and see whether the want of employment is, in any case, consistent with happiness; carefully distinguishing,

* Matt. xxv. 23.

however, between the happiness resulting from natural constitution and that resulting from acquired habits. It is true that many of the careless, thoughtless girls you are acquainted with enjoy more happiness, such as they are capable of, in mornings and evenings spent at their worsted-work, than the most diligent cultivation of the intellect can ever insure to you. But the question is, not whether the butterfly can contentedly dispense with the higher instincts of the industrious, laborious, and useful bee, but whether the superior creature could content itself with the insipid and objectless pursuits of the lower one. The mind requires more to fill it in proportion to the largeness of its grasp: hope not, therefore, that you could find either their peace or their satisfaction in the purse-netting, embroidering lives of your thoughtless companions. Even to them, be sure, hours of deep weariness must come: no human being, however low her degree on the scale of mind, is capable of being entirely satisfied with a life destitute of object or improvement. Remember, however, that it is not at all by the comparative contentedness of the mere animal existence of others that you can test the qualifications of a habit of life to constitute your own happiness: that must stand on a far different basis.

In the case of a very early marriage, there may be, perhaps, no opportunity for the weariness I have spoken of. The uneducated and uncultivated girl, removed from the school-room to undertake the management of a household, may not fall an early victim to *eunui*; that fate is reserved for her later days. Household details (either degrading or elevating according as they are attended to as the favourite occupations of life, or, on the other hand, skilfully managed as one of its inevitable and important duties) often fill the mind even more effectually to the exclusion of better things than worsted-work or purse-netting. The young wife, if ignorant and uneducated, soon sinks from the companion of her husband, the guide and example of her children, into the mere nurse and housekeeper. A clever upper-servant would, in nine cases out of ten, fulfil all the offices engrossing her time and interest a thousand times better than she can herself. For her, however, even for the nurse and housekeeper, the time of *ennui* must come; for her it is only deferred. The children grow up, and are scattered to a distance requiring no further mechanical cares; neither occupying time nor exciting the same kind of engrossing interest as formerly. The mere household details, however carefully husbanded and watchfully

self-appropriated, will not afford amusement throughout the whole day; and, utterly unprovided with subjects for thought or objects of employment, life drags on a wearisome and burdensome chain. We have all seen specimens of this, the most hopeless and pitiable kind of *ennui*, when the time of acquiring habits of industry, and interest in intellectual pursuits, is entirely gone, and resources can neither be found in the present nor hoped for in the future. Hard is the fate of those who are bound to such victims by the ties of blood and duty. They must suffer, second-hand, all the annoyances *ennui* inflicts on its wretched victims. No natural sweetness of temper can long resist the depressing influence of dragging on from day to day an uninterested, unemployed existence; besides, those who can find no occupation for themselves will often involuntarily try to lessen their own discomfort by disturbing the occupations of others. This species of *ennui*, of which the sufferings begin in middle-life and often last to extreme old age (as they have no tendency to shorten existence), is far more pitiable than that experienced by the girl or the young woman before her matron-life begins. Then, hope is always present to cheer her on to endurance; besides, she is at that time

conscious of power and energy to change the habits of her life so effectually as to brave all future fears of *ennui*. It is of great importance, however, that these habits should be acquired early ; for though they may be equally possible of acquisition in the later years of youth, other dangerous resources may in the mean time tempt the unoccupied and uninterested girl into their excitements. Those whose minds are too active and vivacious to live on without an object, may easily find one in the dangerous and selfish amusements of coquetry—in the seeking for admiration and its enjoyment when obtained. The very woman who might have been the most happy herself in the enjoyment of intellectual pursuits, and the most extensively useful to others, is often the one who, from misdirected energies and feeling, will pursue most eagerly, be most entirely engrossed by, the delights of being admired and loved by those to whom in return she is entirely indifferent. Having once acquired the habit of enjoying this selfish excitement, the simple, safe, and ennobling employments of self-cultivation, of improving others, are laid aside for ever, because the power of enjoying them is lost. Do not be offended if I say that this is the fate I fear for you. At present the two paths of life are open

before you; and youth, excitement, the example of your companions, the easiness and the pleasure of the worldling's career, make it the most fertile of attractions. Besides, your conscience does not, perhaps, speak with sufficient plainness as to its being the career of the worldling; you can find admirers enough, and give up to them all the young fresh interests of your active mind, all the precious time of your early youth, without ever frequenting the ball-room, or the theatre, or the race-course,—nay, even while professedly avoiding them on principle: we know, alas! that the habits of the selfish and heartless coquette are by no means incompatible with an outward profession of religion.

It is to save you from any such dangers that I earnestly press upon you the deliberate choice and immediate adoption of a course of life in which the systematic, conscientious improvement of your mind should serve as an efficacious preservation from all dangerously exciting occupations. You should prepare yourself for this deliberate choice by taking a clear and distinct view of your object and your motives. Can you say with sincerity that they are such as the following,—that of acquiring influence over your fellow-creatures, to be employed for the advancement of their eternal

interests—that of glorifying God, and of obtaining the fulfilment of that promise, “They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever”*? If this be the case, your choice must be a right and noble one; you will never have reason to repent of it, either in this world or the next. Among the collateral results of this conscientious choice will be a certain enjoyment of life, more independent than any other of either health or external circumstances, and the lofty self-respect arising from a consciousness of never having descended to unworthy methods of amusement and excitement.

To attain, however, to the pleasures of intellectual pursuits, and to acquire from them the advantages of influence and respect, is quite a distinct thing from the promiscuous and ill-regulated habits of study pursued by most women. Women who read at all generally read more than men; but, from the absence of any intellectual system, they neither acquire well-digested information, nor, what is of far more importance, are the powers of their mind strengthened by exercise. I have known women read for six hours a day,

* Daniel, xii. 3.

und, after all, totally incapable of enlightening the inquirer upon any point of history or literature; far less would they be competent to exercise any process of reasoning, with relation either to the business of life or the occurrences of its social intercourse. And how many difficulties and annoyances in the course of every day might be avoided altogether if women were early exercised in the practice of bringing their reasoning powers to bear upon the small duties and the petty trials that await every hour of our existence! Studies are altogether useless unless they are pursued with the view of acquiring a sounder judgment, quicker and more accurate perceptions of the every-day details of business and duty. That knowledge is worse than useless which does not lead to wisdom. To women more especially, as their lives can never be so entirely speculative as those of a few learned men may justifiably be, the great object in study is the manner in which they can best bring to bear each acquisition of knowledge upon the improvement of their own character, or that of others. The manner in which they may most successfully promote the welfare of their fellow-creatures, and how, as the most effectual means to that end, they can best contribute to their daily and

hourly happiness and improvement,—these, and such as these, ought to be the primary objects of all intellectual culture. Mere reading would never accomplish this: mere reading is no more an intellectual employment than worsted-work or purse-netting. It is true that none of these latter employments are without their uses; they may all occupy the mind in some degree, and soothe it, if it were only by creating a partial distraction from the perpetual contemplation of petty irritating causes of disquiet. But while we acknowledge that they are all good in their way for people who can attain to nothing better, we must be careful not to fall into the mistake of confounding the best of them, viz. *mere* reading, with intellectual pursuits: if we do so, the latter will be involved in the depreciation often falling upon the former when it is found to improve neither the mind nor the character, nor to provide satisfactory sources of enjoyment.

There is a great deal of truth in the well-known assertion of Hobbes, however paradoxical it at first appears: “If I had read as much as others, I should be as ignorant.” One cannot but feel its applicability in the case of some of our acquaintance, who have been for years *mere* readers at the

rate of five or six hours a day. One of these same hours daily, well applied, would have made them more agreeable companions and more useful members of society than a whole life of their ordinary reading.

There must be a certain object of attainment, or there will be no advance: unless we have decided what the point is that we desire to reach, we never can know whether the wind blows favourably for us or not.

In my next letter I mean to enter fully into many details as to the best methods of study; but during the remainder of this I shall confine myself to a general view of the nature of the foundation to be laid, before any really valuable or durable superstructure can be erected.

The first point to direct your attention to is the improvement of the mind itself,—a point of far more importance than the furniture you are to put into it. This improvement can only be effected by exercising deep thought upon all the subjects you study, assimilating the ideas and the facts provided by others until they are blended into oneness with the forms of your own mind.

During your hours of study it is of great importance that no page should ever be perused

without carefully subjecting its contents to the thinking process I have spoken of: unless your intellect is actively employed while you are professedly studying, the time is worse than wasted, for you are acquiring habits of idleness most difficult to lay aside.

You should be always engaged in some work affording considerable exercise to the mind—some book that obliges you to pause and ponder over its sentences—some kind of study causing the feeling of almost physical fatigue: when, however, this latter sensation comes on, you must rest; the brain is of too delicate a texture to bear the slightest over-exertion with impunity.* Premature decay of its powers, and accompanying bodily weakness and suffering, will inflict a severe penalty if you neglect the symptoms of mental exhaustion.† Your mind, however, like your body, ought to be exer-

* “The vessel whose rupture occasioned the paralysis was so minute and so slightly affected by the circulation that it could have been ruptured only by the over-action of the mind.”
—*Bishop Jebb's Life*.

† “This is Nature's law; she will never see her children wronged. If the mind, which rules the body, ever forgets itself so far as to trample upon its slave, the slave is never generous enough to forgive the injury, but will rise and smite its oppressor. Thus has many a monarch mind been dethroned.”
—*Longfellow*.

Hyperion

cised to the very verge of fatigue ; otherwise you cannot know whether there has been exercise sufficient to increase the strength and energy of the mental or physical powers.

The more vigorous such exercise, the shorter the time you can support it. Perhaps even an hour of close thinking would be too much for most women. Your object, however, ought not to be so much the quantity as the quality of the exercise. If your peculiarly delicate and sensitive organisation cannot support more than a quarter of an hour's continuous and concentrated thought, you must content yourself with that. Experience will soon prove that even the few minutes thus employed will give you a great superiority over the six-hours-a-day readers of your acquaintance, and will serve as a solid and sufficient foundation for all the lighter superstructure afterwards to be laid upon it. This latter, in its due place, I consider of nearly as much importance as the foundation itself ; for, keeping steadily in view that usefulness is to be the primary object of all your studies, you must devote much more time and attention to the embellishing, because refining, branches of literature, than would be necessary for those whose office is not so peculiarly that of soothing and pleasing as woman's.

is. Even these lighter studies, however, must be subjected to the same reflective process as those more severe, or they will never become an incorporate part of the mind itself; on the contrary, if this process is neglected, they will stand out, as the knowledge of all uneducated people does, in abrupt and unharmonising prominence.

It is not to be so much your object to acquire the power of quoting poetry or prose, or to be acquainted with the names of the authors of celebrated fictions and their details, as to be imbued with the spirit of heroism, generosity, self-sacrifice,—in short, the practical love of the beautiful every universally-admired fiction is calculated to excite, whether or not it have a professedly moral tendency. The refined taste, the accurate perceptions, the knowledge of the human heart, and the insight into character, which intellectual culture can highly improve, even if it cannot create, are to be the principal results as well as the greatest pleasures you are to look forward to. In study, as in every other important pursuit, the immediate results—those most tangible and encouraging to the faint and easily disheartened—are exactly those least deserving of anxiety. A couple of hours' reading of poetry in the morning might qualify you to act

the part of oracle that very evening to a whole circle of inquirers; it might enable you to tell the names, and dates, and authors of a score of remarkable poems: and this is a species of knowledge which every one can appreciate. It is not, however, comparable in its nature to the refinement of mind, the elevation of thought, the deepened sense of the beautiful, imparted or increased by a really intellectual study of the same works. I do not wish to depreciate the good offices of the memory; it is very valuable as a handmaid to the higher powers of the intellect. I have, however, generally observed that where much attention is devoted to the recollection of names, facts, dates, &c., the higher species of intellectual cultivation have been neglected: attention to them, on the other hand, would never involve any neglect of the advantages of memory; a cultivated intellect can suggest a thousand associative links to assist the memory and render it much more extensively useful than a mere verbal memory could ever be. The more of these links (called by Coleridge hooks-and-eyes) you can invent for yourself, the more will your memory become an intellectual faculty. By such means, also, you can retain possession of all the information your reading supplies, without paying such ex-

clusive attention to the tangible and immediate results of study as would deprive you of those more solid and permanent. These latter consist, as I said before, in the improvement of the mind itself, not in its furniture. A modern author has remarked that the improvement of the mind is like the increase of money from compound interest in a bank; every fresh increase, however small, serving as another connecting link for further acquisitions. This remark strikingly illustrates the value of an intellectual kind of memory. Every new idea serves as a "hook-and-eye," to fasten together the past and the future; every new fact intellectually remembered serves as an illustration of some formerly-established principle: instead of burdening you with the separate difficulty of remembering itself, it will assist you in remembering other things.

That action is in inverse proportion to power, is a universal law; therefore the deeply-thinking mind will find a much greater difficulty in drawing out its capabilities on short notice, and arranging them in the most effective position, than a mind of mere cleverness, of acquired and not assimilated knowledge. But this difficulty need not be permanent, though at first inevitable. Besides, a woman's mind is less liable to it; as, however thoughtful

her nature may be, this thoughtfulness is seldom strengthened by habit. She is seldom called upon to concentrate the powers of her mind on any intellectual pursuits requiring intense and long-continuous thought. The few moments of deep thinking I recommend you will never add to your reflective nature any habits requiring serious difficulty to overcome. It is also more important to a woman than to a man (unless he be in public life) to possess action, viz. great readiness in the use and disposal of whatever intellectual powers she may possess. Besides this, you must remember that a want of quickness and facility in recollection, of ease and distinctness in expression, is quite as likely to arise from desultory and wandering habits of mind as from the slowness referable to habits of deep reflection. Most people find difficulty in forcing their thoughts to confine themselves steadily to any given subject, or in afterwards compelling them to take a comprehensive glance of every feature of that subject. Both these processes require much the same habits of mind: the latter, perhaps, though apparently the more discursive in its nature, demands a still greater degree of intellectual attention than the former. After the mind is set in motion it requires

a stronger exertion to confine its movements within prescribed limits than when it is steadily fixed on one given point. For instance, it would be easier to meditate on the subject of patriotism, bringing before the mind every quality of the heart and head this virtue has a tendency to develope, than to take in, at one comprehensive glance*, the different mental and moral qualities of those several individuals who have been most remarked for the virtue. Unless the thoughts were under strong and habitual control, they would infallibly wander to other facts relating to these same individuals, unconnected with the given subject, to curious incidents in their lives, to contemporary characters, &c. ; thus loitering by the wayside in amusing, but here unprofitable, reflection : for every exercise of thought like that I have described is only valuable in proportion to the degree of accuracy with which we contemplate in one instantaneous glance, laid out upon a map as it were, those features *only* belonging to the given subject, keeping out of view all foreign ones. There is perhaps no faculty of the mind more susceptible of evident, as it

* It is the theory of Locke, that the angels have all their knowledge spread out before them, as in a map, — all to be seen together at one glance.

were tangible, improvement than this: besides, the exercise of mind it involves is one of the highest intellectual pleasures; you should therefore immediately and perseveringly devote your efforts and attention to seek out the best mode of cultivating it. Even the reading of books requiring deep and continuous thought is only a preparation for this higher exercise of the faculties — a useful, indeed, and necessary preparation, because it promotes the habit of fixing the attention and concentrating the powers of the mind on any given point. But in assimilating the thoughts of others with your own mind and memory, the mind itself remains nearly passive: it is as the wax receiving an impression, that must for this purpose be in a suitable state of impressibility: in exact proportion to the suitableness of this state are the clearness and beauty of the impression. But, even when most true and most deep, its value is extrinsic and foreign: it is only when the mind begins to act for itself, weaving out of its own materials a new and native manufacture, that the real intellectual existence can be said to commence. While, therefore, I repeat my advice to you, to devote some portion of every day to such reading as requires the strongest exertion of your powers of thought, I

wish at the same time to remind you that even this, the highest species of *reading*, is only to be considered as a means to an end: though productive of higher and nobler enjoyments than the unintellectual can conceive, it is nothing more than the stepping-stone to the genuine pleasures of pure intellect, to the ennobling sensation of directing, controlling, and making the most elevated use of the powers of an immortal mind.

To woman the power of abstracted thought, and the enjoyment derived from it, is even more valuable than to man. His path lies in active life; and an earnest craving for excitement, for action, the characteristic of all powerful natures, is in man easily satisfied: it is satisfied in the sphere of his appointed duty; "he must go forth, and resolutely dare." Not so the woman, whose scene of action is her quiet home: her virtues must be passive; and, with every qualification for successful activity, she is often compelled to chain down her vivid imagination to the most monotonous routine of domestic life. When entirely debarred from external activity, the restless nature, that can find no other mode of indulgence, will often invent for itself imaginary trials and imaginary difficulties: hence the petty quarrels, the mean jealousies, that

disturb the peace of many homes where tranquillity and happiness might have been if the same activity of thought and feeling had been early directed into right channels. A woman who finds real enjoyment in the improvement of her mind will have neither time nor inclination for worrying her servants and her family; an avocation in which many really affectionate and professedly religious women exhaust their superfluous energies,—energies that, under wise direction, might have dispensed peace and happiness instead of disturbance and annoyance. But a woman who has acquired due control over her thoughts, and can find interest in their intellectual exercise, will have little temptation to allow them to dwell on mean and petty grievances, thus tormenting alike herself and others. That admirable Swedish proverb, “It is better to rule your house with your head than with your heels,” will be exemplified in all the practice of the well-regulated and comprehensive mind (and comprehensiveness of mind is as necessary to the skilful management of a household as to the government of an empire). Such a mind will be able to contrive systems of domestic arrangement that allot exactly the suitable works at the suitable times to each member of the establishment: no one will be

over-worked, no one idle; there will not only be a place for every thing, and every thing in its place, but there will also be a time for every thing, and every thing will have its allotted time. A system of this kind once arranged by a master-mind, and still superintended by a steady, intelligent, but not *incessant* inspection, raises the character of the governed as well as that of her who governs: they are never brought into collision with each other; and the inferior, whose manual expertness may far exceed that to which the superior has even the capability of attaining, will nevertheless look up with admiring respect to those powers of arrangement, that firm but never capriciously-exerted authority, which so facilitate and lighten the task of obedience and dependence. This mode of managing a household, even if possible to them, would of course be disliked by those who, having no higher resources, would find the day hang heavy on their hands unless they watched all the details of household work, and made every action of every servant result from their own immediate interference, instead of from an enlarged and uniformly operating system.

This subject has brought me back to the point from which I began,—the *practical* utility of a

cultivated intellect, and the additional power and usefulness it confers,—raising its possessor above all the mean, petty cares of daily life, and imparting ennobling influences to its most trifling details.

The power of thought I so earnestly recommend you to cultivate, is even still more practical, and still more useful, when considered relatively to the most important business of life—that of religion. Prayer and meditation, and that communion with the unseen world which imparts a foretaste of its happiness and glory, are enjoyed and profited by in proportion to the power of controlling the thoughts and of exercising the mind. Having a firm trust, that to you every other object is considered subordinate to the great one of advancement in the spiritual life, it must be a very important consideration whether, and how far, the self-education you may bestow on yourself will help you towards its attainment. In this point of view there can be no doubt that the mental cultivation recommended in this letter has a much more advantageous influence upon your religious life than any other manner of spending your time. Besides the many collateral tendencies of such pursuits to favour that growth in grace which I trust will always remain the principal object of your desires,

experience will soon show you that every improvement in the reflective powers, every additional degree of control over the movements of the mind, may find an immediate exercise in the duties of religion.

The wandering thoughts habitually excluded from your hours of study will not be likely to intrude frequently or successfully during your hours of devotion: the habit of concentrating all the powers of your mind on one particular subject, and then developing all its features and details, will require no additional effort for the pious heart to direct it into the lofty employments of meditation on eternal things, and communion with our God and Saviour. At the same time the employments of prayer and meditation will in their turn re-act upon your merely secular studies, and facilitate your progress in them by giving you habits of singleness of mind and steadiness of mental purpose.

LETTER IX.

THE CULTIVATION OF THE MIND.

(Continued.)

IN continuation of my last letter, I shall proceed at once to the minor details of study, and suggest for your adoption such practices as others by experience have found conducive to improvement. Not that one person can lay down any rules for another that might in every particular be safely followed: we must, each for ourselves, experimentalise long and variously upon our own mind before we can understand the mode of treatment best suited to it; and we may, perhaps, in the progress of such experiments, derive as much benefit from our mistakes themselves as if the object of our experiments had been at once attained. But it is not from wilful mistakes, or from deliberate ignorance, that we ever derive profit; and instead of striking out entirely new plans for your-

self, in which time and patience, even hope, may be exhausted, I should advise you to listen for direction to the suggestions of those who by more than mere profession have frequented the road where you are anxious to make rapid progress. In books you may find much that is useful; from the conversation of those who have been self-educated you may receive still greater assistance, as the advice thus personally addressed must of course be more discriminating and special. For this latter reason, in all that I am now about to write I keep in view the peculiar character and formation of your mind. I do not address the world in general, who would profit little by the course of education here recommended; I only write to my Unknown Friend.

In the first place, I should advise, as of primary importance, the formation of a regular system of employment. Impose upon yourself the duty of getting through so much work every day; even, if possible, lay down a plan as to the particular period of the day to be devoted to each occupation: many otherwise wasted moments would be saved by having arranged beforehand the successive objects of attention. The great advantage of such regularity is experienced in the acknowledged truth of Lord

Chesterfield's maxim, "He who has most business has most leisure." For when the multiplicity of affairs to be got through absolutely necessitates the arrangement of an appointed time for each, the same habits of regularity and of undilatoriness (if I may be allowed the expression) are insensibly carried into the lighter pursuits of life. There is another important reason for the self-imposition of those systematic habits which to men of business are a necessity; but this you cannot at all appreciate until you have experienced its importance: I refer to the advantage of being, by a self-imposed rule, provided with an immediate object*; ordinarily a deficiency in women's intellectual pursuits. I would not depreciate "the mightiness of the future;"† but it is evident that the human mind is so constituted as to feel motives increasing in strength as they approach in nearness: otherwise why should it require such strong faith, and that faith a supernatural gift, to enable us to sacrifice the present gratification of a moment to the happiness of an eternity? While, therefore,

* On n'échappe toutefois à l'ennui que moyennant une occupation habituelle qui se répète chaque jour, ayant un but déterminé. — *Baron Wessenberg's Souvenirs et Pensées.*

† Coleridge.

you seek by earnest prayer and reverential desire to bring the future into perpetually operating force upon your principles and practice, do not, at the same time, be deterred by any superstitious fears from profiting by yourself and urging on others every immediate and temporal motive, not inconsistent with the great one, "to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever."

While your principal personal object and personal gratification in your studies is to be derived from the gradual improvement of your mind and tastes, this gradual improvement will be often so imperceptible that you will need support and cheering during many weeks and months of apparently profitless mental application. Such support you may provide for yourself in the daily satisfaction resulting from having fulfilled a certain task, from having obeyed a law, though only a self-imposed one.* Men in their studies have almost

* Il n'y a de bon qu'une occupation dont on soit toujours sûr, et qui nous mène jusqu'au bout en nous empêchant de nous ronger nous-mêmes. . . Il faut savoir aimer sa destinée. Il ne dépend pas de nous de la changer, mais il dépend de nous de nous attacher à une occupation qui préserve, comme disait le grand Bossuet, de cet inexorable ennui qui fait le fond de la vie humaine.—*Baron Wessenberg's Souvenirs et Pensées*: "the results of the experience of a long and busy life," written by this successful and highly esteemed statesman at the age of 74.

always that near and immediate object which I recommend you to create for yourself. For them, as well as for you, the distant future of attained mental eminence and excellence is indeed the principal object. But they have it in their power "to cheat the toil and cheer the way," by many intermediate steps, serving both as landmarks in their course and objects of interest within their immediate reach. They can almost always keep some special object in view as the result and reward of the studies of each month, or quarter, or year. They read for prizes, scholarships, fellowships, &c.; and these rewards, tangibly and actually within their reach, excite their energies and quicken their exertions.

For women there is nothing of the kind; it is therefore a useful exercise of her ingenuity to invent some substitute, however inferior to the original. For this purpose I have never found any thing so effectual as a self-imposed system of study, — the stricter the better. It is not desirable, however, that this system should be one of very constant employment; the strictness I spoke of only refers to its regularity. As the great object is that you should break through your rules as seldom as possible, it is better to fix the number of your hours of

occupation rather below, certainly not above, your average habits. The time that may be to spare on days when you meet with no interruption from visitors may also be systematically disposed of; you may always have some book in hand ready to fill up any unoccupied moments, without, even on these occasions, wasting your time in deliberating as to what your next employment shall be.

You understand me, therefore, to recommend that those hours you devote to fixed employment are not to exceed the number you can ordinarily secure without interruption on *every* day of the week, exclusive of visitors, &c. &c. All the advantages pertaining to the system I recommend are much enhanced by the uniformity of its observance: indeed, it is on rigid attention to this point that its efficacy principally depends.

I will now enter into the details of the system of study which, however modified by your own mind and habits, you will, I hope, in some form or other, adopt.

The first arrangement of your time ought to be the laying apart of a certain period every day for the deepest thinking you can compel yourself to, either on or off book. Having said so much on this point in my last letter, I should run the risk of

repetition if I dwelt longer upon it here. And therefore I only mention it to give it again the most prominent position in your studies, to recommend its invariably occupying a daily place in them. For every other pursuit, two or three times a week might answer as well, perhaps better; the interruptions are too frequent where each receives only the short interval of attention that can be allotted in a daily distribution. Before I take a final leave of this subject, I must mention to you some of the books calculated to give you the most effectual aid in the prosecution of your deeper studies. Butler's "Analogy" will perhaps be the very best to begin with: you must not, however, flatter yourself that you in any degree understand this or other books of the same nature until you penetrate into their extreme difficulty, — until, in short, you find out that you can *not* thoroughly understand them *yet*. Queen Caroline, George II.'s wife, in the hope of proving to Bishop Horsley how fully she appreciated the value of the work I have just mentioned, told him that she had it constantly beside her at her breakfast-table, to read a page or two in it whenever she had an idle moment. The Bishop's reply was scarcely intended for a compliment. He said that *he* could never open the book without a headache;

and really a headache is in general no bad test of having thought over a book sufficiently to enter in some degree into its real meaning: only remember, that when the headache begins, the reading or the thinking must stop. As you value the long and unimpaired preservation of your powers of mind, guard carefully against their over-exertion.

To return to the "Analogy:" you cannot too soon begin the attentive study of it, which will provide you with materials for the deepest thought, and with a safe foundation for all future ethical studies: the style of writing is, besides, so clear that you will not be puzzled with the mere external form of the idea, instead of fixing all your attention on the difficulties of the thoughts and arguments themselves. Locke on the "Human Understanding" is a work probably often recommended to you. And perhaps, if you keep steadily in view the danger of his materialistic, unpoetic, and therefore untrue, philosophy, the book may do you more good than harm: it will furnish you with useful exercise for your thinking powers; and you will see it so often quoted as authority, on one side as truth, on the other as falsehood, that it may be as well you should form your own judgment of it. You should previously, however, become guarded against any dan-

gers that might result from your study of Locke, by acquiring a thorough knowledge of the philosophy of Coleridge. This will so approve itself to your conscience, your intellect, and your imagination, that there can be no risk of its being supplanted in a mind like yours by "plebeian"* systems of philosophy. Few have now any difficulty in perceiving the infidel tendencies of that of Locke, especially with the assistance of his French philosophic followers, with whose writings you will probably in future years become acquainted for the sake of their charms of style and thought. They have declared the real meaning of his system by the errors they have proved to be its necessary consequences.

Let Coleridge be your previous study, and the philosophic system developed in his various writings will serve at once as a test of the truth of other systems, and as a nucleus, round which all other philosophy may safely enfold itself. The writings of Coleridge form an era in the history of the mind; and their progress in altering the whole character of thought, not only in this but in foreign

* *Plebeii videntur appellandi omnes philosophi qui a Platone et Socrate et ab ea familia dissiderent.* — CICERO, *Tuscul.* 1, 2, 3.

nations, if it has been slow (one of the necessary conditions of permanence), has been already astonishingly extensive. Even those who never heard the name of Coleridge have their habits of thought moulded, their perceptions of truth cleared and deepened, by the powerful influence of his master-mind, — powerful still, though it has probably only reached them through three or four interposing mediums. The proud boast of one of his descendants is amply verified: "He has given the power of vision:"* and in ages yet to come, many, who may unfortunately be ignorant of the very name of their benefactor, will still profit daily, more and more, by the mental telescopes he has provided. Many have rejoiced at having the distant brought near, and the confused made clear, without knowing that Jansen was the name of him who conferred such benefits upon mankind. The immediate artist, the latest moulder of an original design, is he whose skill is extolled and depended upon; so it is even already in the case of Coleridge. It is only those intimately acquainted with him who can plainly see that it is by the power of vision he has conferred, that the really philosophic writers of the present

* Derwent Coleridge.

day are enabled to give views so clear and deep on the subjects of most interest to the human mind. All those amongst modern authors who combine deep learning with enlarged wisdom, vivid and poetical imagination with acute perception of the practical and the true, have evidently educated themselves in the school of Coleridge. He well deserves the name of the Christian Plato, having erected upon the ancient and long-tried foundation of that philosopher's beautiful system of intuitive truths the various details of minor but still valuable knowledge that the accumulated studies of four thousand intervening years have supplied, at the same time harmonising the whole by the all-pervading spirit of Christianity.

Coleridge is truly a Christian philosopher : at the same time, however, though it seem a paradox, I must warn you against taking him for your guide and instructor in Theology. A Socinian during all the years in which vivid and never-to-be-obliterated impressions are received, he could not entirely free himself from those rationalistic tendencies gradually and insensibly incorporated with all his religious opinions. He afterwards became the powerful and successful defender of the saving truths he had long denied ; but it

was only in cases where Arianism was openly displayed, and was to be directly opposed. He seems to have been entirely unconscious that its subtle evil tendencies, its exaltation of the understanding above the reason, its questioning, disobedient spirit, might all in his own case have insinuated themselves into his judgments on theological and ecclesiastical questions, though in these only. The prejudices wrought in early youth into the very texture of the mind are likely to be unsuspected in exact proportion to the degree of intimacy that assimilated them with its forms. However this may be, you will not fail to observe that, in all branches of philosophy not directly referring to religion, Coleridge's system of teaching is opposed to the general character of his own theological views, and that he has himself furnished the opponents of these views with the most powerful arms that can be wielded against them.

Every one of Coleridge's writings should be carefully perused more than once, more than twice; in fact, they cannot be too often read: the only danger of such continued study would be, that the enjoyment of finding every important subject so beautifully thought out for you, might deter *your* natural indolence from the comparatively

laborious exercise of thinking them out for yourself. The three volumes of his "Friend," his "Church and State," his "Lay Sermons," and "Statesman's Manual," will each of them furnish you with most important present information and inexhaustible materials for future thought.

Reid's "Inquiry into the Human Mind," and Dugald Stewart's "Philosophy of the Mind," are also books you must carefully study. Brown's "Lectures on Philosophy" are feelingly and gracefully written; but, unless you find a peculiar charm and interest in the style, there will not be sufficient compensation for the sacrifice of time so voluminous a work would involve. The early chapters giving an account of the leading systems of Philosophy, and some very ingenious chapters on Memory, are perhaps as much of the book as you need to study carefully.*

The works of the German philosopher Kant will, some time hence, serve as a useful exercise of thought; you will find it interesting to trace the resemblances and differences between the great English and the great German philosopher, Kant and Coleridge. Locke's small work on "Edu-

* It is to be remembered here that I address a general reader, not a metaphysical student.

cation" contains many valuable suggestions. Watts on the "Mind" is also well worthy your attention. It is quite necessary that Watts' "Logic" should form a part of your studies; it is written professedly for women, and with ingenious simplicity. A knowledge of the forms of Logic is useful even to women, for the purpose of sharpening and disciplining the reasoning powers.

Do not be startled when I further recommend you Blackstone's "Commentaries" and Burlamaqui's "Treatise on Natural Law." These are books richly filled with valuable ideas and important information, besides affording admirable opportunities for the exercise both of concentrated and comprehensive thought. Finally, I recommend to your unceasing and most respectful study the works of that "prince of modern philosophers," Lord Bacon. In his great mind were united the characteristics of the two ancient, but nevertheless universal, schools of philosophy, the Aristotelic and the Platonic. It is, I believe, the only instance known of this difficult combination. His "Essays," his "Advancement of Learning," his "Wisdom of the Antients," you might understand and profit by even now. Through all the course of an education I hope only to end with your life, you cannot do

better than to keep him as your constant companion and intellectual guide.

The foregoing list of works seems almost too voluminous for any woman to make herself mistress of; but you may trust to one who has had extensive experience for herself and others, that the principle of "Nulla dies sine lineâ" is as useful in the case of reading as in that of painting: the smallest quantity of work daily performed will accomplish, in a year's time, the task that in the beginning of the year would have seemed hopeless to the inexperienced.

As yet I have only spoken of philosophy; but there is another branch of knowledge, viz. science, also requiring great concentration of thought, and it ought to receive some degree of attention, or you will appear, and, what would be still worse, feel, very stupid and ignorant with respect to many of the practical details of ordinary life. You are continually hearing of the powers of the lever, the screw, the wedge; of the laws of motion, &c. &c.: they are often brought forward as illustrations even on simply literary subjects. An acquaintance with these matters is also necessary to enter with any degree of interest into the wonderful exhibitions of mechanical powers amongst the prominent objects

of attention in the present day. You cannot even make intelligent inquiries, displaying a graceful, because unwilling, ignorance, without some degree of general knowledge of science.

Among the numerous elementary works that make the task of self-instruction pleasant and easy, none can excel, if any have equalled, the "Scientific Dialogues" of Joyce. In these six little volumes you will find a compendium of all preliminary knowledge. Even these, however, easy as they are, require to be carefully studied. The comparison of the text with the plates, the testing for yourself the truth of each experiment (I do not mean that you should practically test it, except in a few easy cases—your mind has not a sufficient taste for science to compensate for the trouble), will furnish you with very important lessons in the art of fixing your attention.

"Conversations on Natural Philosophy," in one volume, by Mrs. Marcet, is nearly as simple and clear as the "Scientific Dialogues;" it will be useful to succeed them. It is a great assistance to the memory to read a different work on the same subject while the first is still fresh in your mind. The sameness of the facts gives the additional force of a double impression; and the variation in

the mode of stating them, always more striking when the books are the respective works of a man and of a woman, adds the force of a trebled impression, stronger than the two others, because it involves more exercise of the intellect; that is, on the supposition that, in accordance with the foregoing rules, you should think over each respective statement until you have reconciled them together by ascertaining the cause of the apparent variation.

I shall now proceed to those lighter branches of literature which are equally necessary with the preceding, and which will supply you with the current coin of the day,—very necessary for ordinary intercourse, though in point of real value far inferior to the bank-stock of philosophic and scientific knowledge that is to be the chief object of acquisition. History is a branch of lighter literature specially requiring your attention; it provides you with illustrations for all philosophy, with excitements to heroism and elevation of character, stronger perhaps than any mere theory can ever afford. The simplest story, the most objective style of narrative, will be that best fitted to answer these purposes. Your own philosophic deductions will be much more beneficial to your intellect than

any one else's, supposing always that you are willing to make history a really intellectual study.

Tytler's "Elements of History" is a most valuable book, and not an unnecessary word throughout the whole. If you do not find getting by heart an insuperable difficulty, you will do well to commit every line to memory. Half a page a day of the small edition would soon lay up for you a sufficient extent of historic learning to serve as a foundation to all future attainments in this branch of study. Such outlines of history are a great assistance in forming the comprehensive views necessary on the subject of contemporaneous events: a glance at a chart of history, or at La Voisne's invaluable Atlas, may be allowed from time to time; but the principal arrangement ought to take place within your own mind, for the sake both of your memory and your intellect. Such outlines of history will, however, be very deficient in the interest and excitement this study ought to afford you, unless you combine with them minute details of particular periods; first, perhaps, of particular countries.

Thus I would have Rollin's "Antient History," succeed the cold and dry outlines of Tytler. Hume's "History of England" will serve the same purpose

relatively to the modern portion; and for the History of France, that of Eyre Evans Crowe imparts a brilliancy to perhaps the most uninteresting of all historic records. If that is not within your reach, Millot's "History of France," in four volumes, though dull enough, is a safe and useful schoolroom book, and may be read with profit afterwards: this too would possess the advantage of helping you on at the same time in the French language, or at least keeping up your knowledge of it.

It is desirable that all books only required to yield objective information should be read in a foreign language; you thus insensibly render yourself more permanently, and as it were habitually, acquainted with the language in question, and carry on two studies at the same time. If, however, you are not sufficiently acquainted with the language to prevent any danger of a division of attention by being obliged to puzzle over the mere words instead of applying yourself wholly to the meaning of the author, you must not venture upon the attempt of deriving a double species of knowledge from the same subject-matter: the effect of the history as a story or picture impressed on the mind or memory would be lost if this were mixed up with any other object.

Sir Walter Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather" are the best History of Scotland you could read; Robertson's may come afterwards when you have time.

Of Ireland and Wales you will learn enough from their constant connection with the affairs of England. Sismondi's "History of the Italian Republics," in *The Cabinet Cyclopædia*; the "History of the Ottoman Empire," in *Constable's Miscellany*; the rapid sketches of the histories of Germany, Austria, and Prussia, in *Voltaire's Universal History*;—will be perhaps quite sufficient for this second class of histories.

The third ought to enter into more particular details, and thus confer a still livelier interest upon bygone days. For instance, with reference to Ancient History, you should read some of the more remarkable of *Plutarch's Lives*, those of Alexander, Cæsar, Theseus, Themistocles, &c.; the *Travels of Anacharsis*, the worthy results of thirty years' hard labour of an eminent scholar*: the *Travels of Cyrus*, *Telemachus*, *Belisarius*, and *Numa Pompilius*, are also, though in very different degrees, useful and interesting. The *Plays* of

* L'Abbé Barthelémi.

Corneille and Racine, Alfieri, Schiller, and Metastasio, on historical subjects, will make a double impression on your memory by exciting your imagination. All ought to be read about the same time that you study the parallel periods of history. This is of much importance.

The same plan is to be pursued with reference to modern history. The brilliant detached histories of Voltaire, Louis XIV. and XV., Charles XII., and Peter the Great, ought to be read while the outlines of the general history of the same period are freshly impressed on your memory. The vivid historical pictures of De Barante may be made the same use of: as an objective historian he stands perhaps unrivalled.

Shakspeare's Historical Plays are the best accompaniment to Hume's History of England. Our modern novels, too, will supply you with rich and varied information on the characters and manners of former times. They are a very important part of English literature, and essential to the completion of your circle of study. That they also may be rendered as useful as possible, they should be read at the same time with the entirely true history of the period they refer to.

From history I have insensibly glided into the subject of works of fiction, one perhaps previously requiring a few words of apology; for the strong recommendations with which I have pressed their study upon you may sound strange to many worthy people. In your own enlightened and liberal mind I do not, indeed, suspect the indwelling of any such exclusive prejudices as forbid altogether the perusal of works of fiction: such prejudices belong, perhaps, to more remote periods, to those distant times when title-pages were seen announcing "Paradise Lost, translated into prose for the benefit of those pious souls whose consciences would not permit them to read poetry."* This latter prejudice—that against poetry—seems, as far as my observation extends, to be entirely forgotten. Fiction in this form is now considered universally allowable; and some conscientious persons, who would not allow themselves or others the relaxation of a novel of any kind, will indulge unhesitatingly in the same sort of love-stories, rendered still more exciting through the medium of poetry. Most women, unfortunately, are incapable of carrying out an argument from one course of action into

* Quarterly Review.

another ; or even of clearly comprehending, when it is suggested to them, that whatever is wrong in prose cannot be right in poetry. But in a general way you will be able to form your own judgment on this subject, by observing how much safer prose-fiction is for yourself at times, when your feelings are excited, and your mind unsettled and exhausted. A novel, even the most trifling novel of fashionable life, if it has only cleverness sufficient to engage your thoughts, would be, perhaps, a suitable and expedient manner of spending your time at the very period that poetry would be decidedly injurious. Indeed, at all times, those who have vivid imaginations and strong feelings should carefully guard and sparingly indulge themselves in the perusal of poetic fictions.

If it were possible, as some say, to study poetry artistically alone, contemplating it as a work of art, and not allowing it to excite the affections or the passions, there is no kind of poetry that might not be enjoyed with safety in any state of mind. It is doubtful, however, whether any work of art ought to be so contemplated. Its excellence can only be estimated by the degree of emotion it produces ; how, then, can an unimpassioned examination ever form a true estimate of its merit? When such

an inspection of any work of art can be carried through, there is generally some fault either in the thing criticised or in the critic; for the distinctive characteristic of art is, that it is addressed to our *human* nature, and excites its emotions. In the words of the great German poet—

“ Science, O Man, thou shar’st with higher spirits;
But Art thou hast alone.”

Pure science must be the same to all orders of created beings, but, as far as our knowledge extends, the physical organisation of humanity is required for a perception of the beauties of art; therefore physical excitement must be united with mental in proportion as the work of art is successful. Do not, then, hope ever to be able to study poetry without a quickened pulse and a flushing cheek; you may as well leave it alone altogether, if it produces no emotion. It must be either rhyme and no poetry, or to you poetry can be nothing but rhyme.

Think not, however, that I do wish you to leave it alone altogether; nothing could be further from my purpose.

There is some old saying about fire being a good servant, but a bad master. Now this is what I would say of the faculty of imagination, as cultivated and excited by works of fiction in general,

including, of course, poetic fictions. As long as you can keep your imagination, even though thus quickened and excited, under the strict control of religious feeling—as long as you are able to prevent its rousing your temper to an ungovernable degree of susceptibility—as long as you can return from an ideal world to the lowly duties of everyday life with a steady purpose and unflinching determination, there can be no danger for you in reading poetry. Perhaps you will, on the contrary, tell me that all this is impossible, and, coward-like, you may prefer resigning the pleasure to encountering the difficulties of struggling against its consequences: but this is not the way either to strengthen your character or to form your mind. All cultivation requires watchfulness and additional precautions, either more or less: you must not, for the sake of a few superable difficulties, resign the otherwise unattainable mental refinement effected by poetry. Besides, its exalting and ennobling influence, if properly understood and employed, will help you incalculably over the rugged paths of your daily life; it will shed softening and hallowing gleams over many things you would otherwise find difficult to endure, many duties otherwise

too hard to fulfil; for there is poetry in every thing that is really good and true. Happy those practical students of its beauties who have learned to track the ore beneath the most unpromising surfaces! Poetry I look upon, in fact, as the most essential, the most vital, part of the cultivation of your mind, as from its spirit your character will receive its most refining influence: you must learn the double lesson of extracting it from every thing, and of throwing it around every thing; for the better attainment of this object, you must study it in itself, that you may become deeply imbued with its spirit.

Along with portions of the poetry of every age and of every nation, I would have you diligently study the criticisms of the masters of the art. It is true that the intimate knowledge of all that has been written on this hackneyed subject will never supply the want of natural poetic taste, of that union of mental and moral refinement which produces the only infallible touchstone of the beautiful: still it is certain that such criticisms tend to refine and sharpen a natural taste, where it does exist; and, without bringing their technical rules practically to bear upon the objects of your delighted ad-

miration*, they will insensibly improve, refine, and subtilize the natural delicacy of your perceptions.

No criticisms can, perhaps, equal the masterly ones of Frederick Schlegel, or those of the less powerful but not less rich mind of Augustus William Schlegel,—“those two wonderful brothers,” as a modern *littérateur* has justly called them. Leigh Hunt, with perhaps more poetic originality, but with less accuracy of æsthetical perception, will be a useful guide to you in English poetry. Burke’s “Treatise on the Sublime and Beautiful” will give you the most correct general ideas on the subject of taste. These are always best and most influential after they have been for some time assimilated with the forms of the mind. It is a far more useful exercise to apply them yourself to individual cases than merely to lend your attention, though carefully and fixedly, to the applications made for you by the writer: Alison’s “Essay on Taste,” though otherwise improving and interesting, saves the reader too much trouble in this way.

Your enjoyment and appreciation of poetry will

* The critic who suffers his philosophy to reason away his pleasure is not much wiser than a child who cuts open his drum to see what is within that causes the music.—*Edinburgh Review*.

be much heightened by having it read aloud—by yourself to yourself, if you should have no other sympathising reader or listener.

The sound of the metre is essential to the full *sense* of the meaning and the beauty of all poetry. Even the rhymeless flow of blank verse is absolutely necessary to an accurate and entire perception of the effect the author intends to produce: it is in both cases as the colouring to a picture. It may be, indeed, the part of the composition appealing most directly to the senses, but all works of art must be imperfect which do not make this appeal; for, as I said before, all works of art are intended to affect our *human* nature.

A well-practised *eye* will, it is true, detect in a moment either the faults or the excellence of the rhyme or the flow; but the effect on the mind cannot be the same as when the impression is received through the *ear*.

Nor is the fuller appreciation of the poetry you read aloud the only advantage to be derived from the practice I recommend. Few accomplishments are more rare, though few more desirable, than that of reading aloud with ease and grace. Great are the sufferings inflicted on a sensitive ear by listening to one's favourite passages, touching in

pathos, or glorious in sublimity, travestied into twaddle by false taste or even want of practice in the reader. For it is not always from false taste that the species of reading above complained of proceeds; on the contrary, there may be a very correct perception of the writer's meaning and object, while, from want of practice, from mere mechanical inexpertness, there may be an incapacity for giving effect to that meaning: hence arises false emphasis, and a thousand other disagreeables.

In this art, this important art of reading aloud, simplicity ought to be the grand object of attainment, at the same time that it is the last attained to. It is a point to reach after long efforts; not to start from, as those of uncultivated or artificial taste would imagine. I must repeat, that it cannot be acquired without persevering practice. The best time to set vigorously about such practice would be when you have but just listened with dismay to the injuries inflicted on some favourite poet by the laboured or tasteless reading of an unpractised performer.

From reading aloud I pass on to a still more important subject, that of writing: both are intimately connected branches of the main one — cultivation of the mind. When this latter is attained

in the first place, a slight individual direction of previously acquired powers will enable you to succeed in both the former. In your own case, however, as in that of all those who have not the active organisation involving facilities for mechanical efforts, it will be quite necessary to give a special direction to your studies for the attainment of any degree of excellence in both those arts. Those, on the contrary, whose organisation is more lively and vigorous, whose nature and habits fit them more for action than thought, will find little difficulty in making any degree of cultivation of mind an immediate stepping-stone to the other attainments: such persons can read at once with force and truth, as soon as education has given them accurate perceptions; they will also write with ease, rapidity, and energy, as soon as the mind is furnished with suitable materials. This is a kind of superiority you may often be inclined to envy, — at least until experience has taught you, in the first place, that the law of compensation is universal; in the second, that every thing acquired through hard labour and many struggles becomes doubly valuable. For the first, you may observe that the persons who possess naturally the mechanical facilities I have spoken of, will never attain

to an equal degree of excellence with those whose naturally soft and inactive organisation obliges them to labour over every step of their onward way. They can, I repeat, never attain to the same degree of excellence, either in feeling or expression ; because they do not possess the same refined delicacy of perceptions, the same deep thoughtfulness and intuitive wisdom, as those who owe these advantages to the very organisation from which they otherwise suffer. Here again I remind you of another universal law — that action is always in inverse proportion to power. For the second, you will find there is a pleasure in overcoming difficulties, compared with which all easily attained or naturally possessed advantages appear tame and vapid* : and, besides the difference in the pleasurable excitement of the contest, you are to consider the advantage to the character from a battle and a victory.

When I speak to you of writing and of your attaining to excellence in this art, I have nothing in view but the improvement of your private

* Ce n'est pas la victoire, c'est le combat qui fait le bonheur des nobles cœurs. — *Montalembert*.

Si le Tout-puissant tenait dans une main la vérité, et dans l'autre la recherche de la vérité, c'est la recherche que je lui demanderais. — *Lessing*.

letters. It can seldom be desirable for a woman to challenge public criticism by appearing before the world as an author. "My wife does not write poetry, she lives it," was the reply of Richter when his highly gifted Caroline was applied to for literary contributions to her sister's publications. He described in these words the real nature of a woman's duties. Any degree of avoidable publicity must lessen her peace and happiness; and few circumstances can make it prudent for a woman to give up retirement and retired duties, and subject herself to public criticism, probably public blame.

The writing I advise you to accomplish yourself in, is the epistolary style alone, which may serve as a means not only of communicating pleasure to your friends, but of conferring extensive and permanent benefits upon them. How useful has the kind, judicious, well-timed letter of a Christian friend often proved, even when the spoken word of the same friend might, during circumstances of excitement, have only increased imprudence or irritation!

Few printed books have effected more good than the private correspondence of pious, well-educated, strong-minded persons. Indeed, the influence exercised by letters and conversation is so much the

peculiar and appropriate sphere of a woman's usefulness, that all her studies should be pursued with an especial view to the attainment of these accomplishments. The same qualities are to be desired in both. The utmost simplicity—for nothing can be worse than speaking as if you were repeating a sentence out of a book, except writing a friendly letter as if you were writing out of a book,—great abundance and readiness of information for the purpose of supplying a variety of illustrations,—intelligent perception of, and a cautious attention to, the points you are called upon to answer,—a conciseness of expression, perfectly consistent with those minute details which, gracefully managed, as women only can, form the chief charm of conversation and writing,—with all these you should be careful to give free play to the peculiarities of your own individual mind: this will always, even where there is little or no talent, produce a pleasant degree of originality.

Before every thing else, however, let unstudied ease, I could almost say carelessness, be the marked characteristics of both your conversation and your writing. Refined taste will, indeed, insensibly produce the former without any effort of

your own, far better than the strictest rules could do.

The praises of nonsense have been often written and often spoken; nor can it ever be praised more than it deserves. However, "within its magic circle none dare walk"* but those who have naturally quick and refined perceptions, assisted by careful cultivation. Narrow indeed is the boundary dividing unfeminine flippancy from the graceful nonsense, pronounced "exquisite"† by many high authorities as well as our own feelings. The unsuccessful attempt at its imitation always reminds me of Pilpay's fable of the Donkey and Lap-dog:—The poor donkey, who had been going on very usefully in its own drudging way, began to envy the lap-dog the caresses it received, and fancied that it would receive the same if it jumped upon its master as the lap-dog did;—how awkwardly and unnaturally its attempts at playfulness were executed, how unwelcome they proved, I need not tell you. Nothing is more difficult than playfulness or even vivacity of manner, nothing is so sure a test of good breeding and high cultivation of mind: either may carry you safely through, but

* Dryden, of Shakspeare.

† Miss Ferrier. Mrs. H. E.

their union alone can render playfulness and vivacity entirely fascinating.

After all that I have written, I must again repeat what I began with,—that you are to try each different mode of study for yourself ; that the advice of others will be of use to you only when you have assimilated it with your own mind, testing it by your own practice, and giving it the fair trial of *patient* perseverance.

I ought perhaps, before I close this letter, to make some apology for recommending, as a part of your course of study, either Rollin or Hume ; one because he is “*trop bon homme*,” * the other because he is not “*bon*” in any sense of the word. My apology, or rather my reason, will, however, be only a repetition of my former advice, viz. that it is desirable to read history simply as a *story* ; and to form your *own* philosophic and religious opinions previously, and from other sources.

So many valuable and important histories, so many necessary books on every subject, have been written by the professed infidel, as well as by the practical forgetter of God, that you must prepare yourself for a constant state of intellectual watch-

* Napoleon's remark on Rollin's History.

fulness, as to the various opinions suggested by the different authors you study. It is not their opinions you want, but their facts. Most standard histories, even Hume and Voltaire, tell truth as to all leading facts: after half-a-century or so of filtration, truth becomes purified from contemporary passions and prejudices, and can be easily got at without any importantly injurious mixture.

It was to mark my often-repeated wish that you should *philosophise* for yourself, that I have omitted the names of Guizot and Hallam in the list of authors recommended for your perusal. With the tastes I suppose you to possess and to acquire, you will not be likely to leave them out of your own list. The histories of Arnold and Niebuhr also belong to a distinct class of writings. I should prefer your being intimately acquainted with the so-called poetical histories which have been long received and loved before you interest yourself in these modern discoveries.

But Dr. Arnold's Lectures upon Modern History contain such a treasure of brilliant philosophy, of deep thought and forcible writing, that the sooner you begin them, the more intimately you study them, the better pleased I should be. With respect to his singular views on religion and politics, you

must always keep carefully in mind that his peculiar mental organisation incapacitated him from forming correct opinions on any subject connected with imagination or metaphysics. You will soon be able to trace how the absence of these two powers affected all his reasonings; as it were closing up his mind against the most important species of evidence. I speak now on the supposition that you have formed, or will form, all your views on religion and politics from your own judgment, assisted by the experience of the few whose minds you know to be qualified by their many-sidedness to judge clearly and impartially — upon universal, not *partial* data. Remember at the same time, however, that you belong to a church professedly protesting against popes of every description, against the unscriptural practice of calling any man “Father upon earth.” May you attend diligently, and in a child-like spirit of submission, to the teaching of that Holy and Apostolic Church! There will then be no danger of your being led astray either by the infidel Hume or the sainted Arnold.

Finally, I must again refer to that subject which ought to be the beginning and end, the foundation and crowning-point, of all our studies. Let “whatever you do be done to the glory of

God."* Earthly motives, if pure and amiable, may hold a subordinate place; but unless the mainspring of your actions be the desire "to glorify your Father which is in Heaven," you will find no real peace in life, no blessedness in death. As one likely means of keeping this primary object of your life constantly before you, I strongly recommend your making the cultivation and improvement of your mental powers the subject of special prayer at all the appointed seasons of prayer: at the same time your studies themselves should never be entered upon without prayer, — prayer, that the evil mingled with all earthly things may fall powerless on your sanctified heart, — prayer, that every additional intellectual acquirement may make you a more useful servant of the Lord your God — more persuasive, more influential in that great work which in different ways is appropriated to all in their several spheres of action, viz. the high and holy office of winning souls to Christ.†

* 1 Corinthians, x. 31. † 1 Peter, iii. 1.

LETTER X.

AMUSEMENTS.

IN addressing the following observations to you, I keep in mind the peculiarity of your position, — a position making you, while scarcely more than a child, independent of external control, and forcing you into the responsibilities of deciding thus early on a course of conduct which may seriously affect your temporal and eternal interests. More happy are those placed under the authority of strict parents, who have already chosen and marked out for themselves the path they expect their children strictly to adhere to. The difficulties that may still perplex the children of such parents are comparatively few : even if the strictness of the authority over them be inexpedient and overstrained, it affords them a safeguard and a support for which they cannot be too grateful ; it preserves them from the responsibility of acting for themselves at a

time when their age and inexperience alike unfit them for a decision on any important practical point: it keeps them disengaged, as it were, from being pledged to any peculiar course of conduct until they have formed and matured their opinion as to the habits of social intercourse most expedient to adopt. Thus, when the time for independent action comes, they are quite free to pursue any new course of life without being shackled by former professions, or exposing themselves to the reproach (and consequent probable loss of influence) of having altered their former opinions and views.

Those, then, who are early guarded from any intercourse with the world, instead of murmuring at the unnecessary strictness of their seclusion, ought to reflect with gratitude on the advantages it affords them. Faith ought, even now, to teach them the lesson experience never fails to impress on every thoughtful mind, — that it is a special mercy to be preserved from the duties of responsibility until we are, comparatively speaking, fitted to enter upon them.

This is not, however, the case with you. Ignorant and inexperienced as you are, you must now select from amongst all the modes of life placed

within your reach those which you consider the best suited to secure your welfare for time and for eternity. Your decision now, even in very trifling particulars, must have some effect upon your state in both existences. The most unimportant event of this life carries forward a pulsation into eternity, and acquires a solemn importance from the reaction. Every feeling we indulge or act upon becomes a part of ourselves, and is a preparation, by our own hand, of a scourge or a blessing for us throughout countless ages.

It may seem a matter of comparative unimportance, of trifling influence over your future fate, whether you attend Lady A.'s ball to-night or Lady H.'s to-morrow. You may argue to yourself that even those who now think balls entirely sinful have attended hundreds of them in their time, and have nevertheless become afterwards more religious and more useful than others who have never entered a ball-room. You might add, that there could be no more positive sin in passing two or three hours with two or three people in Lady A.'s house in the morning than in passing the same number of hours with two or three hundred people in the same house in the evening. This is, indeed, true; but are you not deceiving yourself by re-

ferring to the mere overt act? That is, as you imply, past and over when the evening is past; but it is not so with the feelings which *may* make the ball either delightful or disagreeable to you,—feelings, perhaps then for the first time excited, never to be stilled again,—feelings which, when they once exist, will remain with you throughout eternity; for even if by the grace of God they are finally subdued, they will still remain with you in the memory of the painful conflicts, the severe discipline of inward and outward trials, required for their subjugation.

Do not, however, suppose that I mean to attribute exclusive or universally injurious effects to the atmosphere of a ball-room. In the innocent smiles and unclouded brow of many a fair girl the experienced eye truly reads their freedom from any taint of envy, malice, or coquetry; while, on the other hand, unmistakable and unconcealed exhibitions of all these evil feelings may often be witnessed at a so-called “religious party.” This remark, however, is not to my purpose; it is only made *par parenthèse*, to obviate any pretence for mistaking my meaning, for supposing that I attribute positive sin to that which I only object to as the possible, or rather the probable, occasion of sin.

I always think this latter distinction very important to attend to in discussing, in a more general point of view, the subject of amusements of every kind : it is, however, enough merely to notice it here, while we pass on to the question I urge you to apply personally to yourself, namely, whether the ball-room be not a more favourable atmosphere for the first excitement and after-cultivation of many feminine failings than the quieter and more confined scenes of other social intercourse.

It is by tracing the effect produced on our own mind that we can alone form a safe estimate of the expediency of doubtful occupations. This is the primary point of view to consider the subject in, though by no means the only one ; for every Christian ought to exhibit a readiness in his own small sphere to emulate the unselfishness of the great Apostle : " If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."* The fear of the awful threatenings against those who " offend," *i. e.* lead into sin, any of " God's little ones,"† should combine with love towards those for whom the Saviour died, to induce us willingly to sacrifice

* 1 Corinthians, viii. 13.

† Matt. xviii. 6, 7.

things personally harmless, on the ground of their being injurious to others.

But this part of the subject is of less importance for our present consideration, as, from your youth and inexperience, your example cannot yet exercise much influence on those around you. Let us therefore return to the more personal part of the subject, namely, the effect produced on your own mind. I have spoken of feminine "failings:" I should, however, be inclined to apply a stronger term to the first I am about to notice—the love of admiration, considering how closely it must ever be connected with the fatal vice of envy. She who has an earnest craving for general admiration for herself is exposed to a strong temptation to regret the bestowal of any admiration on others. She has an instinctive exactness in her account of receipt and expenditure; she calculates almost unconsciously that the time and attention and interest excited by the attractive powers of others is so much homage subtracted from her own. That beautiful aphorism, "The human heart is like heaven—the more angels the more room for them," is to such persons as unintelligible in its loving spirit as in its wonderful philosophic truth. Their craving is insatiable, once it has become habitual; their appetite is in-

creased and stimulated, instead of being appeased, by the anxiously-sought-for nourishment.

These observations can only apply strictly to the fatal desire for *general* admiration. As long as the esteem and preference of the wise and good is our object, it is not only that there are fewer opportunities of exciting the feeling of envy at this approbation being granted to others; there is, further, an instinctive feeling of its incompatibility with the very object we aim at. The case is altogether different when we seek to attract those whose admiration may be won by qualities quite distinct from any connected with moral excellence. There is here no restraint on our evil feelings: when we cannot equal the accomplishments, the beauty, and the graces of another, we may possibly be tempted to envy, and, still further, to depreciate, those of the hated rival—perhaps, worse than all, may be tempted to seek to attract attention by means less simple and less obvious. If the receiving of admiration be injurious to the mind, what must the seeking for it be! “The flirt of many seasons” loses all mental perceptions of refinement by long practice in hardihood,—as the hackneyed practitioner unconsciously deepens the rouge upon her cheek, until, unperceived by her blunted visual

organs, it loses all appearance of youth and beauty. Some instances of the kind I allude to have come within even your limited experience: from the shrinking surprise with which you now contemplate them, I have no doubt that you would wish to shun even the first step in the same career. Indeed it is probable that you, under any circumstances, would never go so far in coquetry as those to whom your memory readily recurs. Your innate delicacy, your feminine high-mindedness, may at any future time, as well as at present, preserve you from the bad taste of challenging those attentions which your very vanity would reject as worthless if they were not voluntarily offered.

Nevertheless, even in you, habits of dissipation may produce an effect to your inmost being almost equally injurious. You may possess an antidote to prevent any external manifestations of the poisonous effects of an indulged craving for excitement; but general admiration, however spontaneously offered and modestly received, has an inevitable tendency to create a necessity for mental stimulants. This, amongst other ill effects, will, worst of all, incapacitate you from the appreciative enjoyment of healthy food: —

" The heart that with its luscious cates
The world has fed so long,
Could never taste the simple food
That gives fresh virtue to the good,
Fresh vigour to the strong." *

The pure and innocent pleasures diffused plentifully around us by the hand of Providence, will, too probably, become tasteless and insipid to one whose habits of excitement have destroyed the fresh and simple tastes of her mind. Stronger doses, as in the case of the opium-eater, will each day be required to produce an exhilarating effect, and without this there is even now no enjoyment, — without this, in course of time, there will not even be freedom from suffering.

An analogy exists throughout between the mental and the physical intoxication : it continues the most strikingly when we consider both in their most favourable points of view, when we suppose the victim to self-indulgence at last willing to retrace her steps. Such is the fearful advantage granted to our spiritual enemy by wilful indulgence in sin, that it is only when trying to adopt or resume a life of sobriety and self-denial we become exposed to the severest temporal punishments of self-in-

* R. M. Milnes.

dulgence. As long as a course of this self-indulgence is continued, if external things prosper with us, comparative peace and happiness may be enjoyed (if, indeed, the loftier pleasures of devotion to God, self-control, and active usefulness can be forgotten, — supposing them to have been once experienced). It is only when the grace of repentance is granted that the returning child of God becomes at the same time alive to the sinfulness of those pleasures that she has cultivated the habit of enjoying, and to the mournful fact of having lost all taste for those simple pleasures which alone are safe, because they only leave the mind free for the exercise of devotion, and the affections warm and fresh for the contemplation of “the things that belong to our peace.”

Sad and dreary is the path the penitent worldling has to traverse: often despairing at the difficulties her former habits have brought upon her, she looks back, longingly and lingeringly, upon the broad and easy path she has lately left. Alas! how many of those thus tempted to “look back” have turned away entirely, and never more set their faces Zionward.

From the dangers and sorrows just described you have still the power of preserving yourself. You

have as yet acquired no factitious tastes; you still are able to enjoy the simple pleasures of innocent childhood. It now depends upon your manner of spending the intervening years, whether, in the trying period of middle-age, simple and natural pleasures will have the power of awakening emotions of joyousness and thankfulness in your heart.

I have spoken of thankfulness, — for one of the best tests of the innocence and safety of our pleasures is, the being able to thank God for them. While we thus look upon them as coming to us from His hand, we may safely bask in the sunshine of even earthly pleasures: —

“The colouring may be of this earth,
The lustre comes of heavenly birth.” *

Can you feel this with respect to the emotions of pleasurable excitement with which you left Lady M.’s ball? I am no fanatic, nor ascetic; and I can imagine it possible (though not probable) that, amongst the visitors there, some simple-minded and simple-hearted people, amused with the crowds, the dresses, the music, and the flowers, may have felt even in this scene of feverish excitement something of “a child’s pure delight in little things.” †

* Keble.

† Trench.

Without profaneness, and in all sincerity, they might have thanked God for the, to them, harmless recreation.

This I suppose possible in the case of some, but for you it is not so. The keen susceptibilities of your excitable nature will prevent your resting contented without sharing in the more exciting pleasures of the ball-room; and your powers of adaptation will easily tempt you forward to make use of at least some of those means of attracting general admiration seeming to succeed so well with others.

56 "Wherever there is life there is danger;" and the danger is probably in proportion to the degree of life. The more energy, the more feeling, the more genius possessed by any individual, the greater also are her temptations. The path safe and harmless for the dull and inexcitable—the mere animals of the human race—is beset with dangers for the ardent, the enthusiastic, the intellectual. These must pay a heavy penalty for their superiority; but is it therefore a superiority they would resign? Besides, the very trials and temptations their superior vitality subjects them to, are not alone its necessary accompaniment, they are also the ne-

cessary means for forming a superior character into eminent excellence.

Self-will, love of pleasure, quick excitability, and consequent irritability, are marked ingredients in every strong character. Its strength must be employed against itself to produce any high moral superiority.

There is an analogy between the metaphysical truths above spoken of, and that fact in the physical history of the world—that coal-mines are generally placed in the neighbourhood of iron-mines. This is a provision involved in the nature of the thing itself; and we know that, without the furnaces thus placed within reach, the natural capabilities of the useful ore would never be developed.

In the same way, we know that an accompanying furnace of affliction and temptation is necessarily involved in that very strength of character which we admire; and also, that without this fiery furnace the vast capabilities of such a nature, both moral and mental, could never be fully developed.

Suffering, sorrow, temptations, are the invariable conditions of a life of progress; and suffering, sorrow, temptations, are all of them always in pro-

portion to the energies and capabilities of the character.

There is another analogy in animated nature, illustrative of the case of those who, without injury to themselves (the injury to our neighbour is, as I said before, a different part of the subject), may attend the ball-room, the theatre, and the race-course. Those animals lowest in the scale of creation, those who scarcely manifest one of the energies of vitality, are also those least susceptible of suffering from external causes. The medusæ are supposed to feel no pain even in being devoured; and the human zoophyte is, in like manner, comparatively out of the reach of every suffering but death. Have you not seen some beings endowed with humanity, nearly as destitute of a nervous system as the medusæ, nearly as insusceptible of any sensation from the accidents of life? Some of these, too, may possess virtue and piety, as well as the animal qualities of patience and sweetness of temper — mere results of their physical organisation. No degree of effort or discipline, however, (indeed, they bear within themselves no capabilities for either,) could enable such persons to become eminently useful, eminently

respected, or eminently loved. They have doubtless some work appointed them to do in God's earthly kingdom, and that a necessary work; but theirs are inferior duties, very different from those which you, and such as you, are called on to fulfil.

Have I in any degree succeeded in reconciling you to the unvaryingly-accompanying penalties necessary to qualify the glad consciousness of possessing intellectual powers, a warm heart and a strong mind? Your high position will, indeed, afford you far less *happiness* than that belonging to the lower ranks in the scale of humanity; but the noble mind will be gradually disciplined into dispensing with happiness; — it will find instead — blessedness.

If yours be a more difficult path than that of others, it is also more honourable: in proportion to the temptations endured will be the brightness of that "crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." *

But there is, perhaps, less necessity for trying to impress upon your mind a sense of your superiority than for urging upon you its accompanying responsibility, and the severe circumspection it

* James, i. 12.

calls upon you to exercise. Thus, from what I have above written, it necessarily follows that you cannot evade the question I am now pressing upon you by observing the effect of dissipation upon others, by bringing forward the example of many excellent women who have passed through the ordeal of dissipation untainted, and, themselves still possessing loving hearts and simple minds, are fearlessly preparing their daughters for the same dangerous course. Remember that those from whom you would shrink from a supposed equality on other points cannot be safely taken as examples for your own course of life. Your personal concern is to ascertain the effect produced upon your own mind by different kinds of society, to examine whether you yourself have the same healthy taste for simple pleasures and unexciting pursuits as before you engaged, even as slightly as you have already done, in the dissipation of a London season.

I once heard a young lady exclaim, when asked to accompany her family on a boating excursion, "Can any thing be more tiresome than a family party?" Young as she was, she had already lost all taste for the simple pleasures of domestic life. Being intellectual and accomplished, she could still

enjoy solitude; but her only ideas of pleasure as connected with a party were those of admiration and excitement. We may trace the same feelings in the complaints perpetually heard of the stupidity of parties, — complaints generally proceeding from those who are too much accustomed to attention and admiration to be contented with the unexciting pleasures of rational conversation, the exercise of kindly feelings, and the indulgence of social habits — all in their way productive of contentment to such as have preserved their minds in a state of freshness and simplicity. Any greater excitement than that produced by the above means cannot, surely, be profitable to those who only seek in society for so much pleasure as will afford them *relaxation*: those who engage in an arduous conflict with ever-watchful enemies both within and without ought carefully to avoid having their weapons of defence *unstrung*. I know that at present you would shrink from the idea of making pleasure your professed pursuit, from the idea of engaging in it for any other purpose but the one above stated — that of necessary relaxation. I should not otherwise have addressed you as I do now. Your only danger at present is, that you may — I should hope, indeed, unconsciously — acquire the habit of

finding excitement needful during your hours of relaxation.

In opposition to all I have said, you will probably be often told that excitement, instead of being prejudicial, is favourable to the health of both mind and body. And this in some respects is true: the whole mental and physical constitution benefit by, and acquire new energy from, occasions of natural excitement; but natural they ought to be, coming in the providential course of the events of life, and neither considered as an essential part of daily food, nor inspiring distaste for simple ordinary nourishment. I fear much, on the other hand, any excitement that we choose for ourselves: that only is quite safe which is dispensed to us by the hand of the great Physician of souls; He alone knows the exact state of our moral constitution, the exact species of discipline it requires from hour to hour.

You will wonder, perhaps, that throughout the foregoing remonstrance I have never recommended to you the test so common amongst many good people of our acquaintance, viz. whether you are able to pray as devoutly on returning from a ball as after an evening spent at home? My reason for this silence was, that I have found the test ineffectual. The advanced Christian, if obedience

to those who are set in authority over her should lead her into scenes of dissipation, will not find her mind disturbed by being an unwilling actor in uninteresting amusements. She, on the other hand, who is just beginning a spiritual life, must be an incompetent judge of the variations in the devotional spirit of her mind: besides, one should anxiously discourage in every case any minute attention to variations of religious feeling; such attention only disturbing and harassing the mind, and thus hindering it from concentrating its efforts upon obedience. Lastly, she who has never been mindful of her baptismal vows of renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil, will “say her prayers” quite as satisfactorily to herself after a day spent in one manner as in another. The test of a distaste for former simple pursuits, and want of interest in them, is a much safer one, more universally applicable, and not so easily evaded. It is equally effectual, too, as a religious safeguard; for the natural and impressible state the mind is kept in by the absence of habitual stimulants is surely the state best calculated for the exercise of devotion,—for self-denial, for penitence and prayer.

Let us return now to a further examination into the nature of the dangers you may be exposed to

by a life of gaiety ; an examination that must be carried on in your own mind with careful and anxious inquiry. I have before spoken of the duty of ascertaining what effects different kinds of society produce upon you : it is only by thus qualifying yourself to pass your *own* judgment on this important subject that you can avoid being dangerously influenced by the assertions you hear made by others. You will probably, for instance, be told that a love of admiration often manifests itself as glaringly in the quiet drawing-room as in the crowded ball-room ; and I readily admit that the feelings cherished into existence, or at least into vigour, by the exciting atmosphere of the latter, cannot be readily laid aside with the ball-dress. There may be less opportunity for their display, less temptation to the often-accompanying feelings of envy and discontent, but the mental process will probably still be carried on—of distilling from even the most innocent pleasures but one species of dangerous excitement. I cannot, however, admit, that to the unsophisticated mind there will be any danger of the same nature in the one case as in the other. Society, when entered into with a simple, prayerful spirit, may be considered one of the most improving as well as one of the most

innocent pleasures allotted to us. Still further, I believe that the exercise of patience, benevolence, and self-denial involved in it is a very important part of the disciplining process by which we are being brought into a state of preparation for the society of glorified spirits, of "just men made perfect."

I advise you earnestly, therefore, against any system of conduct, or indulgence of feeling, inducing your seclusion from society; not only on the grounds of such seclusion involving unnecessary self-denial, but on the still stronger grounds of the loss to the moral being infallibly resulting from the absence of the peculiar species of discipline that social intercourse affords. My object is to point out the dangers to you of peculiar kinds of society,—not by any means to persuade you to avoid it altogether.

Let us, then, consider carefully the respective tendencies of different kinds of society to cherish or create the feelings of "envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness," by exciting a craving for general admiration, and a desire to secure the largest portion for yourself.

You have already been a few weeks out in the world; you have been at small social parties and

crowded balls : they must have given you sufficient experience to enable you to understand the remarks I make.

Have you not, then, felt at the quiet parties I have spoken of (as contrasted with dissipated ones) that it was pleasure enough for you to spend your whole evening talking with persons of your own sex and age over the simple occupations of your daily life, or the studies that engage the interest of your already cultivated mind? Lady L. may have collected a circle of admirers around her, and Miss M.'s music may have been extolled as worthy of an artist ; but upon all this you looked merely as a spectator, without either wish or idea of sharing in their publicity or their renown : you probably did not form a thought, certainly not a wish, of the kind. In the ball-room, however, the case is altogether different ; the most simple and fresh-minded woman cannot escape from feelings of pain or regret at being neglected or unobserved here. She goes for the professed purpose of dancing ; and when few or no opportunities are afforded her of sharing in that which is the amusement of the rest of the room, should she feel neither mortification at her own position, nor envy, however disguised and modified,

at the different position of others, she can possess none of that sensitiveness which is your distinctive quality. It is true, indeed, the experienced chaperon is well aware that the girl who commands the greatest number of partners is not the one most likely to have the greatest number of proposals at the end of the season, nor the one who will finally make the most successful *parti*. This reconciles the prudential looker-on to the occasional and partial appearance of neglect. Not so the young and inexperienced aspirant to admiration: *her* worldliness is now in an earlier phase; and she thinks that her fame rises or falls amongst her companions according as she can compete with them in the number of her partners, or their exclusive devotion to her, which after a season or two is discovered to be a still safer test of successful coquetry. Thus may the young innocent heart be gradually led on to depend for its enjoyment on the factitious passing admiration of a light and thoughtless hour; and, still worse, if possessed of keen susceptibilities and powers of quick adaptation, the lesson is often too easily learnt of practising the arts likely to win attention, — thus losing for ever the simplicity and modest freshness of a woman's nature. That may be a

fatal evening when you first attract sufficient notice to have it said of you that you were more admired than Lucy D. or Ellen M.; it may be the moment for a poisonous plant to spring up in your heart, destined to spread around its baleful influence until your dying day. It is a disputed point amongst ethical metaphysicians, whether the seeds of every vice are equally planted in each human bosom, and only prevented from germinating by opposing circumstances, and by the grace of God assisting self-control. If this be true, how carefully ought we to avoid every circumstance that may favour the commencing existence of before-unknown sins and temptations! The grain that has been destitute of vitality for a score of centuries is wakened into unceasing, because continually renewed, existence by the fostering influences of light and air and a suitable soil. Evil tendencies may be slumbering in your bosom, as destitute of life, as incapable of growth, as the oats in the foldings of the mummy's envelope. Be careful, lest by going into the way of temptation you may involuntarily foster them into the very existence they would otherwise never possess.

When once the craving for excitement has be-

come a part of our nature, there is of course no safety in the quietest, or, under other circumstances, most innocent kind of society. The same amusements will be sought for there as those enjoyed in the ball-room, and every company will be considered insufferably wearisome which does not furnish the now necessary stimulant of exclusive attention and general admiration.

I write the more strongly to you on the subject of worldly amusements, because I see with regret a tendency in the writings and conversation of the religious world, as it is called, to extol every other species of self-denial, but to observe a studied silence respecting this.

A reaction seems to have taken place in the public mind. Instead of the puritanic strictness that condemned the meeting of a few friends for any purposes besides those of reading the Scriptures and praying extempore, practices are now introduced, and favoured, and considered harmless, almost as strongly contrasted with former ones as was the promulgation of the Book of Sports with the strict observances preceding it. We see some, of whose piety and excellence no doubt can be entertained, mingling unhesitatingly in the most worldly amusements of those who are by

profession as well as practice "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." How cruelly are the minds of the simple and the timid perplexed by the persons who thus act, as well as by those popular writings that countenance in professedly religious persons worldly and self-indulgent habits of life! The hearts and the consciences of the "weak brethren" re-echo the warnings given them by the average opinions of the wise and good in all ages of the world, namely, that with respect to worldly amusements they must "come out and be separate." How else can they be sons and daughters of Him, to whom they vowed, as the necessary condition of entering into that high relationship, that they would "renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world?" If the question of "pomps" should be perplexing to some by the different requirements of different stations in life, there is surely less difficulty of the same kind in relation to "vanities." But while the "weak in faith" are hesitating and trembling at the thought of all the opposition and sacrifices a self-denying course of conduct must, under any circumstances, involve, they are still further discouraged by finding that some whom they are accustomed to respect and admire have in appearance gone over

to the enemy's camp. It is only, indeed, in their hours of relaxation that they select as their favourite companions those who are professedly engaged in a different service from their own—those whom they know to be devoted heart and soul to the love and service of that “world which lieth in wickedness.”* Are not, however, their hours of relaxation also their hours of danger—are they not then more likely to be surprised and overcome by temptation than in hours of study or of business? All this is surely very perplexing to the young and inexperienced, however personally safe and prudent it may be for those from whom a better example might have been justly expected. It is deeply to be regretted that there is not more unity of action and opinion amongst those who “love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity,” especially in cases where such unity of action is only interfered with by neglecting to exercise the important and eminent Christian duty of self-denial.

I am inclined to apply terms of stronger and more general condemnation than any I have hitherto used to the amusements more especially termed “Public.”

* 1 John, v. 19.

You should carefully examine, with prayer to be guided aright, whether a voluntary attendance at the theatre or the race-course be not in a degree exposed to the solemn denunciation uttered by the Saviour against those who cause others to offend.* Can that relaxation be a part of the discipline to fit us for our eternal home which is regardless of danger to the spiritual interests of others, and acts upon the spirit of the haughty remonstrance of Cain — “Am I my brother’s keeper?”† For all the details of this argument, I refer you to Wilberforce’s “Practical View of Christianity.” Many other writers have treated this subject ably and convincingly; but none other has ever been so satisfactory to my own mind: I think it will be so to yours. I am aware that much may be said in defence of the expediency of the amusements to which I refer; and as there is a certainty that both of them, or others of a similar nature, will meet with general support until “the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ,”‡ it is a compensatory satisfaction that they are neither

* Matt. xviii. 6, 7.

† Genesis, iv. 9.

‡ Rev. xi. 15.

of them without their advantages to the general welfare of the country; that good is mixed with their evil, as well as brought out of their evil. This does not, however, serve as an excuse for those who, having both mind and judgment enlightened to see the dangers to others and the temptations to themselves of attending such amusements, should still disfigure lives, it may be, in other respects, of excellence and usefulness, by giving their time, their money, and their example to countenance and support them. Woe to those who venture to lay their sinful human hands upon the complicated machinery of God's providence, by countenancing the slightest shade of moral evil because there may be some accompanying good! We cannot look forward to a certain result from any action: that appearing most virtuous may produce effects entirely different from those anticipated; and we can then only fearlessly leave the consequences in the hands of God, when we are sure that we have acted in strict accordance with His will. Does it become the servant of God voluntarily to expose herself to hear contempt and blasphemy attached to the Holy Name and the holy things which she loves; to see on the stage an awful mockery of prayer itself, on the race-course the

despair of the ruined gambler and the debasement of the drunkard? The choice of the scenes you frequent now, of the company you keep now, is of an importance involved in the very nature of things, and not dependent alone on the expressed will of God. It is only the pure in heart who can see God.* It is only those who have here acquired a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light† who *can* enjoy its possession.

It is almost entirely in this point of view that I have urged upon you the close consideration of the permanent influences of every present action. At your age, and with your inexperience, I know that there is an especial aptness to deceive oneself by considering the case of those who, after leading a gay life for many years, have afterwards become the most zealous and devoted servants of God. That such cases are to be met with, is to the glory of the free grace of God; but what reason have you to hope that you should be amongst this small number? Having once wilfully chosen the pleasures of this life as your portion, on what promise do you depend ever again to be awakened to a sense of the

* Matt. v. 8.

† Colossians, i. 12.

awful alternative of either fulfilling your baptismal vows by renouncing the pomps and vanities of the world, or becoming a withered branch of the vine into which you were once grafted—a branch whose end is to be burned ?

Without urging further upon you this hackneyed though still awful warning, let me return once more to the peculiar point of view in which I have, all along, considered the subject, namely, that each present act and feeling, however momentary its indulgence, is an inevitable preparation for eternity, by becoming a part of our never-dying moral nature. You must deeply feel how much this consideration adds to the improbability of your having any desires whatever to become the servant of God some years hence ;—how much it must increase in future every difficulty and every unwillingness you at present experience.

Let us, however, suppose that God will still be merciful to you at the last ; that, after having devoted to the world during the years of your youth the love, the energies, and the powers of mind previously vowed to His holier and happier service, He will still in future years send you the grace of repentance ; that He will effect such a

change in your heart and mind, that the world does not only become unsatisfactory to you—which is a very small way towards real religion—but that to love and serve God becomes to you the one thing desirable above all others. Alas! it is even then, in the very hour of redeeming mercy, of renewing grace, that your severest trials will begin. Then first will you thoroughly experience how truly it is “an evil thing and bitter, to forsake the Lord your God.”* Then you will find that every late effort at self-denial, simplicity of mind and purpose, abstinence from worldly excitements, &c., is met, not only by the evil instincts belonging to our nature, but by the superinduced difficulty of confirmed opposing habits.

Smoothly and tranquilly flows on the stream of habit, and we are unaware of its growing strength until we try to erect an obstacle in its course, and see this obstacle swept away by the long-accumulating power of the current.

In truth, all those who have wilfully added the power of evil habits to the evil tendencies of their fallen nature must expect “to go mourning all the

* Jeremiah, ii. 19.

days of their life." It is only to those who have served the Lord from their youth that "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace." To others, though by the grace of God they may be finally saved, there is but a dreary prospect until the end come. They must ever henceforth consult their safety by denying themselves many pleasant things which the well-regulated mind of the habitually pious may find not only safe but profitable. At the same time they sorrowfully discover that they have lost all taste for those entirely simple pleasures abundantly strewn on the path of God's obedient children. Their path, on the contrary, is rugged, and their flowers are few: their sun seldom shines; for they themselves have formed clouds out of the vapours of earth, to intercept its warming and invigorating radiance: what wonder, then, if some amongst them should turn back into the bright and sunny land of self-indulgence, now looking brighter and more alluring than ever from its contrast with the surrounding gloom?

Let not this dangerous risk be yours. While yet young,—young in habits, in energies, in affections,—devote all to the service of the best of

masters. "The work of righteousness," even now, through difficulties, self-denial, and anxieties, will be "peace, and the effect thereof quietness and assurance for ever." *

* Isaiah, xxxii. 19.

THE END.

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